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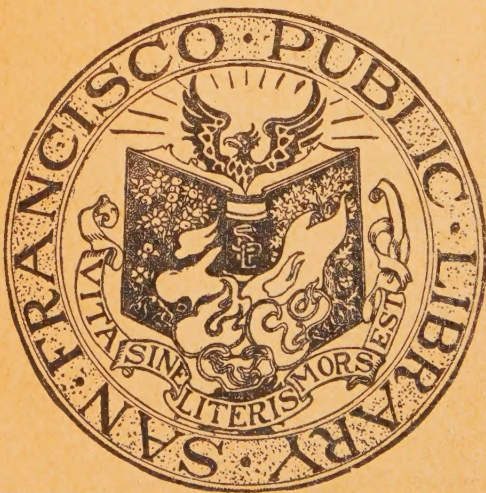
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DEFOE

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*Edited by* WILL D. HOWE

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DANIEL DEFOE  
The "Jure Divino" Portrait, 1706









# DANIEL DEFOE

HOW TO KNOW HIM

*By*

WILLIAM P. TRENT

*Author of*

John Milton, A History of American Literature  
Longfellow and Other Essays, etc.

WITH PORTRAIT

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## PREFATORY NOTE

This book has been prepared, as far as the nature of the materials would permit, along the lines laid down by the general editor of the series in which it appears. All biographical, bibliographical and critical statements are made on the basis of a study of Defoe's life and writings extending over ten years, the results of which have been recorded in an equal number of volumes still in manuscript. When I contradict what has been written by previous biographers and bibliographers, or by myself in articles published in a number of places, it should be understood that I think myself, in the summer of 1916, in possession of facts that warrant the statements to be found here. Every month, however, as I extend my studies in the miscellaneous literature, particularly the pamphlets, of the time, I find occasion to supplement or to alter what I have written upon this or that point, especially in matters bibliographical; hence I am likely to be the first person to call into question details in the record of Defoe's extraordinarily complicated career as I have given them in the following pages. I have merely done my best to present succinctly the essential points of that record, as I now see them, within the compass of a



## PREFATORY NOTE

small book, part of which had to be given up to selections from Defoe's writings.

These selections are inadequate and not fairly representative simply because of Defoe's almost unrivaled copiousness and versatility. I trust, however, that they will be found to give a clearer idea of his varied activity than any previous collection of specimens, and that taken in and for themselves the separate selections will not appear to be devoid of present interest. In practically all cases I have followed the text of a copy of the first edition of the work quoted to be found in my own collection of Defoe's writings, modernizing in respect to spelling, capitalization and punctuation only where such changes seemed essential to the purposes of the series. A few explanatory notes have been added, and in one or two cases I have permitted myself to be swayed in my choice of a selection by the fact that the pamphlet or the book quoted is practically inaccessible to students. I have also refrained from giving selections from a few important poems and tracts—e. g. *The True-Born Englishman* and *A True Relation of the Apparition of one Mrs. Veal*—because these are easily to be found in one or another of the well-known editions of Defoe's works, none of which, be it remembered, contains more than a small fraction of his undisputed writings.

W. P. T.

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DEFOE



# DEFOE

## CHAPTER I

EARLIEST YEARS—1659—1691

**I**T is almost superfluous to say that, if he had not written *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner*, the name of Daniel Defoe would not to-day be known throughout the world. That his name would have been familiar to readers versed in our older fiction is true, and it is equally true that his services as a pioneer in English journalism and his astonishingly versatile achievements as a miscellaneous writer would have engaged the attention of students in many departments of knowledge. But to be known to wide readers and to numerous groups of students is a very different thing from being famous throughout the world, and, in all probability, none or all of Defoe's claims to attention other than as the author of *Robinson Crusoe* would have rendered him thus famous.

Yet, paradoxical as it may seem, the book that has made him famous may fairly be held to have obscured, owing to human infirmities, both the value



of the rest of his work and the interest that should attach to his active and varied career. Defoe was an important politician as well as an influential journalist, and he was one of the best known of all Englishmen during the reigns of William III, Anne and George I; he was moreover a historian, a biographer, a poet, an essayist, a political economist, a sociologist, a religious controversialist, a moralist, a topographer, a writer on occult subjects—in short, a Proteus both in literature and in affairs, who, when he is viewed in the light of the totality of his powers and performances, seems an almost titanic genius. Yet how few of us, although we may flatter ourselves that we are well informed, have the least notion that the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, a book we have not read since we were children, was all this? But are we entirely responsible for our own ignorance? Is not Defoe who wrote so much, Defoe who almost literally buried himself in the enormous mass of his productions, partly responsible for the comparative limitation of his fame? And is not *Robinson Crusoe* itself still more responsible, in a sense, since, while it has made Defoe's name famous, it has also, if one may so phrase it, given occasion to weak and lazy mortals to pigeonhole that name? When we think of Defoe, we tend inevitably to think of his best-known book, with the result that, having labeled one of the most copious and talented authors that ever lived, not to say one

of the most interesting of men, with the title of his chief masterpiece, we follow the prime law of intellectual laziness, and forbear to make further inquiries about him. Hence it is that he remains for most of us merely the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, unless some chance leads us to investigate his life. May this little book prove such a chance to some.

Daniel Defoe was known as plain Daniel Foe until he was well over forty, and it is not entirely clear why he assumed the more aristocratic patronymic. There is reason to think that he believed himself to be of Norman descent, and, after he had been disgraced by standing in the pillory in 1703, he may have wished to emphasize so comforting a belief. However this may be, it is certain that he was the son of James Foe, a butcher of the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, who was himself the son of Daniel Foe, a yeoman of Etton, in Northamptonshire. The family appears to have been of Flemish origin. As the maiden name of James Foe's wife, Daniel Defoe's mother, has not been ascertained, we may provisionally associate with his maternal ancestors certain references made by Defoe to more or less aristocratic connections—for example, his story about a grandfather who kept a pack of hounds, and his categorical statement that he himself was "related to" the blood of Sir Walter Raleigh.

Precisely when Defoe was born is also a matter

of doubt. The year 1661, which is still found in many works of reference, was originally based upon inference only, and is shown to be wrong by a statement made in his marriage license allegation. The most plausible dates are the close of 1659 and the beginning of 1660. Either would enable us to believe that he had vague recollections of the horrors of the Plague he afterward so vividly described, and either would support his assertion that he remembered the great Fire of 1666.

There is every reason to believe that Defoe's parents were God-fearing Presbyterians, who having been given a son, after the birth of a daughter, Mary, resolved that he should be trained for the ministry. We know that he was set to copying parts of the Bible and to taking notes on sermons; but there are also indications that the household was not a gloomy one, and that he enjoyed a fairly normal childhood. When he was about fourteen, he was placed at a good school for boys of dissenting families kept at Newington Green by the Reverend Charles Morton, an excellent scholar, who was afterward first vice-president of Harvard College. Here he remained four or five years, and here, it would seem, he came to the conclusion that he was not fitted for the calling to which his parents had destined him. Later, he gave some account of his studies, from which we gather that, while Mr. Morton paid due attention to the classics and to other

subjects requisite to a theological education, he also afforded more secularly minded pupils an opportunity to pursue courses in history, geography, politics and the modern languages, with emphasis upon English. These studies were certainly those that appealed to Defoe, and they afterward stood him in good stead in his career as a pamphleteer and journalist. Whether at school or in after life he devoted himself to any subject with the faithful and loving assiduity that marks the true scholar may be doubted, but that the taunts of his contemporaries with regard to his habitual inaccuracy, nay, to his illiteracy, had any adequate foundation will be admitted by no close student of his works. His linguistic acquirements were extensive, although somewhat slipshod, and his information, at the end of his life, in history ancient and modern, in matters relating to trade and commerce, in the practical arts, in topography and geography, and even in theology and polite letters, was nothing short of astounding.

There is reason to believe that Defoe had left school and was living in London at the time of the excitement over the Popish Plot in the autumn of 1678. Scattered statements in his writings also point to his being in England in 1680 and 1682; but it is not until the end of 1683 and the beginning of 1684 that we have any definite knowledge of what he was doing. By that time he was a merchant of St. Michael's parish, Cornhill, and he had prospered

sufficiently to take as his wife, on January 1, 1684, a certain Miss Mary Tuffley, who appears to have belonged to a somewhat well-to-do family. With regard to the character both of his business and of his wife we are more or less in the dark. We may dismiss the fantastic theory of one of his biographers, Mr. Thomas Wright, that Defoe, shortly after his marriage, took a vow of silence toward his wife and kept it for about as long a period as Robinson Crusoe remained on his island, but beyond the facts that she bore him at least eight children, that she appears to have been a stay to him in his misfortunes, and that she survived him for a short time, we have almost nothing to record about the wife of a man whose biography needs several large volumes for adequate treatment. With respect to his business, we know that he tended to magnify its importance, and that his enemies, of whom he made many in after years, were accustomed to represent it as contemptible both in quality and in quantity. They charged him with selling stockings over a counter, and he took pains to deny the charge. It seems probable that he did deal in hosiery, mainly in a wholesale way, and that he also traded as a commission merchant to Spain and Portugal. There is evidence that at some time or other he resided in Spain, where he received a training in the wine and liquor trade, and the magnitude of his failure in 1692 points to his being engaged in more than one line of



business as well as in speculation. At what time we should place his residence in Spain is doubtful, but it is plausible to put it before his marriage, and to infer that he then saw something of other parts of Europe. Although his biographers have reason to be skeptical with respect to some of his statements about himself, they seem to have been careless or else lacking in psychological acumen not to have perceived that numerous references in his works to things he had seen in Italy, Bavaria and France indicate a considerable amount of travel on the continent, which may well have taken place during the early years of which no record has been preserved. His lifelong interest in travel and the zeal with which in later life he explored England and Scotland render it at least very likely that, having once got to Spain, he went farther afield.

Our next fact or probable fact in Defoe's life is his joining the army of Monmouth in the summer of 1685. His statement to this effect has been called into question, but not on adequate grounds. He was a zealous Protestant, and three of his schoolmates joined the Duke only to fall into the merciless hands of Jeffreys. How Defoe escaped is a mystery, and what he did with himself before the landing of the Prince of Orange and the flight of King James is equally difficult to determine. He may have lived for a while out of, but not far from, London; he may have done some preaching for a dis-

senting congregation; but there is reason to believe that he did not give up his business connections with the city, and that at the beginning of the reign of William and Mary, whose cause he supported with zeal, his standing among his fellow non-conformists was respectable, if not high. He has dropped hints that as early as 1683 and later in 1687 he wrote on political topics, but nothing clearly from his pen prior to 1691 has yet been recovered. In that year he published a poor satire in verse entitled *'A New Discovery of an Old Intrigue*, thus beginning a career as would-be-poet which he never abandoned entirely, but which, after some twenty years of justified neglect on the part of his contemporaries, he more and more kept in the background. He has a larger number of verses to his account than his favorite poet, Milton, but we shall have occasion to refer only to two or three of his home-spun poems. His was essentially the genius of prose, as the following short quotation from his earliest satire will show:

*The Good Old Times*<sup>1</sup>

In ancient Times when men of Worth were known,  
Not by their Fathers Actions but their own,  
When Honours sacred Pile could be come at,  
But by the Steps to Virtue Dedicate;

---

<sup>1</sup> The opening lines of Defoe's first ascertained publication, "A New Discovery of an Old Intreague: A Satyr Level'd at Treachery and Ambition: Calculated To the Nativity of the Rapparee Plot, and the Modesty of the Jacobite Clergy. De-

No purchas'd Fame our Panegyricks sung,  
 Nor were our widdowed Harps on Willows hung.  
 Renown by Down-right hazard was attain'd,  
 And Deeds of Honour onely Honour gain'd.  
 Expençe of Blood the Noble Theam began,  
 And he alone who sav'd a *Roman* call'd a Man.  
 No gawdy Heir which purchas'd Honour sate  
 Insulting o're the Legal Magistrate;  
 Nor Glittering Knighthood strutting with Renown, }  
 That from the Fathers well stuff'd Chest begun, }  
 By purchased *Mandamus* made his Own:  
 But well Fought Victories did Fame advance,  
 The Old try'd *English* way of Fighting *France*.  
 And certain Valour certain Glory won,  
 The honest Bait to Emulation.<sup>2</sup>

signed By Way of Conviction to the CXVII. Petitioners, and  
 for the Benefit of those that Study the Mathematicks. Unus  
 Nobis Cunctando Restituit.—Ennius. Printed in the Year  
 MDCXCI."

<sup>2</sup> This short passage is given with the spelling, capitaliza-  
 tion and punctuation of the rare original. In all the other  
 selections the text has been somewhat modernized in these  
 particulars.

Defoe's satire was written on the occasion of the con-  
 spiracy against William III, for which Richard Graham, first  
 Viscount Preston, and John Ashton were tried and condemned,  
 the former being pardoned.

## CHAPTER II

BANKRUPTCY AND "AN ESSAY UPON PROJECTS"—  
1692-1697

**W**HETHER Defoe's devotion to literature and to politics—we know that he watched closely the development of events at this period—had the disastrous effect upon his business of which his biographers speak in terms of certainty, we do not clearly know. All that is definitely ascertained appears to be that about 1692 he failed for an amount not far from two hundred and fifty thousand dollars of our money, and that by a composition with his creditors he escaped the horrors of a debtor's prison. Later, his enemies circulated charges of dishonesty against him, but the available evidence seems to show that he had lost through capture of vessels during the war with France, and that he behaved honorably both in giving up property to his creditors and in laboring for years to repay them. That he ever got clear of debt, or, at least, that he was left in peace by creditors until more than twenty years had passed, is scarcely probable; but it is fairly certain that some contemporaries had confidence in

his probity and helped him to get to his feet, that he reduced considerably the amount of his indebtedness, and that by his courage, energy and sagacity, he managed after two separate periods of great financial reverses, during the second of which he lost caste with the public, to bring himself and his family to a position of comparative affluence, which lasted almost to the close of his long life. That his career from forty to seventy, whether in business, journalism or politics, was characterized by thorough honesty, it is idle, in the light of many recent discoveries, to maintain; but it would be uncharitable to judge him harshly without obtaining further information with regard to his commercial misfortunes and without remembering that the journalists and politicians of those days not only held, of necessity, lower standards of conduct than ours, but were subjected to dangers of pillory and prison from which their more fortunate successors are exempt.

At the time of his failure Defoe was not the outcast he seemed to his countrymen a few years later. He soon had the offer of some sort of commission business in Spain, which he could afford to decline because of better opportunities at home. He became accountant to the Commissioners of the Glass Duty, and before losing this post on the abandonment of the duty in 1699, he had established a brick and tile works near Tilbury in Essex. He was a pioneer in



this kind of manufacture, and he appears to have carried it on with considerable success until it was ruined by his imprisonment in 1703 after his conviction for writing his famous pamphlet *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. Some twenty years later he had not abandoned the hope that he might grow rich by making bricks, but he seems instead to have got into a lawsuit with a certain Mr. Ward, and to have helped to reduce that gentleman to poverty.

His occupation as an accountant and as a promoter and superintendent of an infant industry did not check Defoe's propensity to use his pen. Several pamphlets published between 1690 and 1697 have been attributed to him with more or less plausibility, he was probably writing verses, and we know definitely that not long after his bankruptcy he was engaged on one of the most important and interesting of all his books. This was issued in January, 1697, under the well chosen title, *An Essay upon Projects*. It was not a pretentious treatise, but a group of suggestive papers written in homely style upon many reforms which, with intelligent cooperation, might be brought about in England. It was not unique or greatly influential, but it seems to us to-day the most readable, comprehensive and important expression of the spirit of hopefulness and enterprise that had been growing up in England since the Restoration. It represents also, most adequately, the sanguine mobile genius of its author.

He discussed banking—the Bank of England had just been founded—and proposed the establishment of a chain of county banks that must have seemed utopian to his first readers. Bemired travelers would have blessed him could he have demonstrated the practicability of the system of good roads he described, but he wrote before the first English road-maker, John Metcalf, was born. He was blind to the advantages of life insurance, but what he had to say of mutual relief societies and his anticipation of modern accident insurance may well cause a reader of to-day to rub his eyes and to scrutinize the date of the volume. So, too, the section entitled *Of Fools*, which advocates the establishment of an asylum for idiots, gives us plain proof that in his humanitarianism Defoe was well in advance of most of his contemporaries. In view of his own recent experiences, it is not surprising to find him both shrewd and sympathetic in what he writes about the folly of imprisoning men for debt; but one scarcely looks for the intelligence and liberality displayed in the most often quoted pages of his book, those devoted to the higher education of women. These pages alone, coming from a representative of the stronger and more selfish sex, are sufficient to prove that Defoe was far-seeing and sympathetic to an extraordinary degree. The *Essay upon Projects* has no claims to be regarded as a masterpiece of prophetic and poetic genius, but it

may very fairly be described as one of the most interesting books of its kind in our literature, the production of a highly gifted man, exceptional as well in his practical knowledge and in his grasp of details as in his prescience and his sympathy.

It would be easy to select scores of pages in justification of the praise that has been given to what we must regard as Defoe's first book, unless we assign to him a certain short *Life* of his favorite Queen Mary, which appeared in 1695. As our space is limited, however, we must confine ourselves to a single topic, and that may well be the education of woman. As we have seen, what Defoe had to say upon this subject is that portion of the *Essay upon Projects* which is best known to-day, but this does not mean that it is widely known, and of all the topics he discussed none is of more interest and value to the reader of our own times.

### *An Academy for Women*<sup>1</sup>

"I have often thought of it as one of the most barbarous customs in the world, considering us as a civilised and a Christian country, that we deny the advantages of learning to women. We reproach the sex every day with folly and impertinence, while I am confident, had they the advantages of education

---

<sup>1</sup> From "An Essay upon Projects." 1697, pp. 282-304. In the case of nearly all the selections the title is given entire within quotation marks.

equal to us, they would be guilty of less than ourselves.

“One would wonder, indeed, how it should happen that women are conversible at all, since they are only beholding to natural parts for all their knowledge. Their youth is spent to teach them to stitch and sew, or make baubles. They are taught to read indeed, and perhaps to write their names, or so; and that is the height of a woman’s education. And I would but ask any who slight the sex for their understanding, what is a man (a gentleman, I mean) good for that is taught no more?

“I need not give instances, or examine the character of a gentleman with a good estate, and of a good family, and with tolerable parts, and examine what figure he makes for want of education.<sup>2</sup>

“The soul is placed in the body like a rough diamond, and must be polished, or the lustre of it will never appear. And ’tis manifest, that as the rational soul distinguishes us from brutes, so education carries on the distinction, and makes some less brutish than others. This is too evident to need any demonstration. But why then should women be denied the benefit of instruction? If knowledge and understanding had been useless additions to the sex, God Almighty would never have given them capacities; for he made nothing needless. Besides, I would ask such, what they can see in ignorance that they should think it a necessary ornament to a woman? Or how much worse is a wise woman than a fool? Or what has the woman done to forfeit the privilege of being taught? Does she plague

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<sup>2</sup> He did examine this “character” later in his valuable book, *The Compleat English Gentleman*.



us with her pride and impertinence? Why did we not let her learn, that she might have had more wit? Shall we upbraid women with folly, when 'tis only the error of this inhuman custom that hindered them being made wiser?

"The capacities of women are supposed to be greater, and their senses quicker than those of the men; and what they might be capable of being bred to, is plain from some instances of female wit, which this age is not without; which upbraids us with injustice, and looks as if we denied women the advantages of education, for fear they should vie with the men in their improvements.

"To remove this objection, and that women might have at least a needful opportunity of education in all sorts of useful learning, I propose the draught of an Academy for that purpose.

"I know 'tis dangerous to make public appearances of the sex. They are not either to be confined or exposed; the first will disagree with their inclinations, and the last with their reputations; and therefore it is somewhat difficult; and I doubt a method proposed by an ingenious lady in a little book called *Advice to the Ladies*<sup>3</sup> would be found impracticable. For, saving my respect to the sex, the levity, which perhaps is a little peculiar to them, at least in their youth, will not bear the restraint; and I am satisfied nothing but the height of bigotry can keep up a nunnery. Women are extravagantly desirous of going to Heaven, and will punish their pretty bodies to get thither; but nothing else will

---

<sup>3</sup> Defoe seems to have had in mind Mary Astell's *Serious Proposal to Ladies*, the two parts of which were published in 1694 and 1697, respectively.

do it, and even in that case sometimes it falls out that nature will prevail.

“When I talk, therefore, of an academy for women, I mean both the model, the teaching, and the government different from what is proposed by that ingenious lady, for whose proposal I have a very great esteem, and also a great opinion of her wit; different, too, from all sorts of religious confinement, and, above all, from vows of celibacy.

“Wherefore the academy I propose should differ but little from public schools, wherein such ladies as were willing to study should have all the advantages of learning suitable to their genius.

“But since some severities of discipline more than ordinary would be absolutely necessary to preserve the reputation of the house, that persons of quality and fortune might not be afraid to venture their children thither, I shall venture to make a small scheme by way of essay.

“The house I would have built in a form by itself, as well as in a place by itself.

“The building should be of three plain fronts, without any jettings or bearing-work, that the eye might at a glance see from one coin to the other; the gardens walled in the same triangular figure, with a large moat, and but one entrance.

“When thus every part of the situation was contrived as well as might be for discovery, and to render intriguing dangerous, I would have no guards, no eyes, no spies set over the ladies, but shall expect them to be tried by the principles of honour and strict virtue.

“And if I am asked why, I must ask pardon of my own sex for giving this reason for it:—

"I am so much in charity with women, and so well acquainted with men, that 'tis my opinion there needs no other care to prevent intriguing than to keep the men effectually away; for though inclination, which we prettily call love, does sometimes move a little too visibly in the sex, and frailty often follows, yet I think, verily, custom, which we miscall modesty, has so far the ascendant over the sex, that solicitation always goes before it.<sup>4</sup>

"In short, let a woman have never such a coming principle, she will let you ask before she complies, at least if she be a woman of any honour.

"Upon this ground I am persuaded such measures might be taken that the ladies might have all the freedom in the world within their own walls, and yet no intriguing, no indecencies, nor scandalous affairs happen; and in order to this, the following customs and laws should be observed in the colleges, of which I would propose one at least in every county in England, and about ten for the City of London.

"After the regulation of the form of the building as before:—

"(1) All the ladies who enter into the house should set their hands to the orders of the house, to signify their consent to submit to them.

"(2) As no woman should be received but who declared herself willing, and that it was the act of her choice to enter herself, so no person should be confined to continue there a moment longer than the same voluntary choice inclined her.

"(3) The charges of the house being to be paid

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<sup>4</sup> A few lines of verse are omitted.

by the ladies, every one that entered should have only this encumbrance, that she should pay for the whole year, though her mind should change as to her continuance.

“(4) An Act of Parliament should make it felony without clergy for any man to enter by force or fraud into the house, or to solicit any woman, though it were to marry, while she was in the house. And this law would by no means be severe, because any woman who was willing to receive the addresses of a man, might discharge herself of the house when she pleased; and, on the contrary, any woman who had occasion, might discharge herself of the impertinent addresses of any person she had an aversion to, by entering into the house.

“In this house,<sup>5</sup> the persons who enter should be taught all sorts of breeding suitable to both their genius and their quality; and, in particular, music and dancing, which it would be cruelty to bar the sex of, because they are their darlings; but besides this, they should be taught languages, as particularly French and Italian; and I would venture the injury of giving a woman more tongues than one.

“They should, as a particular study, be taught all the graces of speech, and all the necessary air of conversation, which our common education is so defective in that I need not expose it. They should be brought to read books, and especially history,<sup>6</sup> and so to read as to make them understand the world, and be able to know and judge of things when they hear of them.

“To such whose genius would lead to it, I would

<sup>5</sup> These words are made a heading in the original.

<sup>6</sup> From first to last this was Defoe's favorite study.

deny no sort of learning; but the chief thing in general is to cultivate the understandings of the sex, that they may be capable of all sorts of conversation; that their parts and judgments being improved, they may be as profitable in their conversation as they are pleasant.

“Women, in my observation, have little or no difference in them, but as they are or are not distinguished by education. Tempers indeed may in some degree influence them, but the main distinguishing part is their breeding.

“The whole sex are generally quick and sharp. I believe I may be allowed to say generally so, for you rarely see them lumpish and heavy when they are children, as boys will often be. If a woman be well-bred, and taught the proper management of her natural wit, she proves generally very sensible and retentive; and without partiality, a woman of sense and manners is the finest and most delicate part of God’s creation; the glory of her Maker, and the great instance of his singular regard to man, his darling creature, to whom he gave the best gift either God could bestow, or man receive. And ’tis the sordidest piece of folly and ingratitude in the world to withhold from the sex the due lustre which the advantages of education gives to the natural beauty of their minds.

“A woman well bred and well taught, furnished with the additional accomplishments of knowledge and behaviour, is a creature without comparison; her society is the emblem of sublimer enjoyments; her person is angelic and her conversation heavenly; she is all softness and sweetness, peace, love, wit, and delight. She is every way suitable to the sub-



limest wish, and the man that has such a one to his portion, has nothing to do but to rejoice in her, and be thankful.

“On the other hand, suppose her to be the very same woman, and rob her of the benefit of education, and it follows thus:—

“If her temper be good, want of education makes her soft and easy.

“Her wit, for want of teaching, makes her impertinent and talkative.

“Her knowledge, for want of judgment and experience, makes her fanciful and whimsical.

“If her temper be bad, want of breeding makes her worse, and she grows haughty, insolent, and loud.

“If she be passionate, want of manners makes her termagant, and a scold, which is much at one with lunatic.

“If she be proud, want of discretion (which still is breeding) makes her conceited, fantastic, and ridiculous.

“And from these she degenerates to be turbulent, clamorous, noisy, nasty, and the Devil.

“Methinks mankind for their own sakes, since, say what we will of the women, we all think fit one time or other to be concerned with 'em, should take some care to breed them up to be suitable and serviceable, if they expected no such thing as delight from 'em. Bless us! What care do we take to breed up a good horse, and to break him well! and what a value do we put upon him when it is done, and all because he should be fit for our use! and why not a woman? Since all her ornaments and beauty, without suitable behaviour, is a cheat in

nature, like the false tradesman, who puts the best of his goods uppermost, that the buyer may think the rest are of the same goodness.

“Beauty of the body, which is the woman’s glory, seems to be now unequally bestowed, and Nature, or rather Providence, to lie under some scandal about it, as if it was given a woman for a snare to men, and so make a kind of a she-devil of her. Because, they say, exquisite beauty is rarely given with wit, more rarely with goodness of temper, and never at all with modesty. And some, pretending to justify the equity of such a distribution, will tell us ’tis the effect of the justice of Providence in dividing particular excellences among all his creatures, share and share alike, as it were, that all might for something or other be acceptable to one another, else some would be despised.

“I think both these notions false; and yet the last, which has the show of respect to Providence, is the worst; for it supposes Providence to be indigent and empty, as if it had not wherewith to furnish all the creatures it had made, but was fain to be parsimonious in its gifts, and distribute them by piecemeal for fear of being exhausted. . . .<sup>7</sup>

“But to come closer to the business, the great distinguishing difference which is seen in the world between men and women, is in their education, and this is manifested by comparing it with the difference between one man or woman and another.

“And herein it is that I take upon me to make such a bold assertion that all the world are mistaken in their practice about women. For I cannot think that God Almighty ever made them so delicate, so

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<sup>7</sup> A few speculations are here omitted.

glorious creatures, and furnished them with such charms, so agreeable and so delightful to mankind, with souls capable of the same accomplishments with men, and all to be only stewards of our houses, cooks, and slaves.

“Not that I am for exalting the female government in the least. But, in short, I would have men take women for companions, and educate them to be fit for it. A woman of sense and breeding will scorn as much to encroach upon the prerogative of the man, as a man of sense will scorn to oppress the weakness of the woman. But if the women’s souls were refined and improved by teaching, that word would be lost; to say, the weakness of the sex as to judgment, would be nonsense, for ignorance and folly would be no more to be found among women than men. I remember a passage which I heard from a very fine woman; she had wit and capacity enough, an extraordinary shape and face, and a great fortune, but had been cloistered up all her time, and for fear of being stolen, had not had the liberty of being taught the common necessary knowledge of women’s affairs; and when she came to converse in the world, her natural wit made her so sensible of the want of education, that she gave this short reflection on herself:—‘I am ashamed to talk with my very maids,’ says she, ‘for I don’t know when they do right or wrong. I had more need go to school than be married.’

“I need not enlarge on the loss the defect of education is to the sex, nor argue the benefit of the contrary practice; ’tis a thing will be more easily granted than remedied. This chapter is but an essay at the thing, and I refer the practice to those happy days,

if ever they shall be, when men shall be wise enough to mend it."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Nearly a generation later, in *The Great Law of Subordination Considered* (1724), Defoe had something to say about the condition of women, particularly of married women, and expressed the opinion that it had not improved in England. His remarks (p. 3 et seq.; see also the selection from *Augusta Triumphans*, given at p. 292) were chiefly applicable to the lower classes, and were probably colored by the pessimism of old age. He explained the change as due to the vast increase in drinking, which made the husbands brutal. His treatment of the subject forms an interesting supplement to what he had formerly written on drunkenness in England in his *Poor Man's Plea*. See the selection from that tract given at p. 34.

## CHAPTER III

### FIRST CONTROVERSIAL PAMPHLETS—1697-1700

THE year of Defoe's first important book, 1697, is also the year in which he first began clearly to exhibit his powers as a pamphleteer. He continued to write tracts in 1698; then, doubtless owing to preoccupation with business, he allowed a year to pass without employing his pen in any way that can now be traced; then, toward the close of 1700, that is, with the beginning of the new century, he began a career as journalist and miscellaneous writer, that lasted until his death some thirty years later, and is apparently unrivaled in quantity and variety, perhaps even in quality of production.

Three main topics seem to have attracted his attention in 1697-98. These were the controversy whether King William should be allowed to keep an effective standing army, the scandal caused by the practice of occasional conformity, and the efforts making for the suppression of flagrant vice. It would be a waste of time to enumerate such ephemeral writings, much more to discuss them at any length, but it may at least be said that these

earliest tracts illustrate excellently Defoe's talents as a pamphleteer. As a supporter of the king's demand for adequate troops, he showed himself moderate in tone—something rare in those days of partisan vituperation—well informed in history and constitutional law, and admirably endowed with that power of appeal to the common sense of the average reader that is so essential to the true journalist. He was direct and persuasive in style, sensible, downright, fond of illustrative anecdotes, highly loyal, moral, and firmly pious, in short, nearly every thing that the middle-class Englishman is himself and wishes others to be. In these respects his qualifications as a journalist were clearly unmatched in his own day, and probably have not been equaled since, certainly not in point of copiousness and variety. At the very least, he shows a great advance upon his predecessors, such as Sir Roger L'Es-trange.

But Defoe was something more than a journalist—he was the future author of *The Family Instructor* and of *Robinson Crusoe*. Hence we are not surprised to find him attacking the obscenity, the profanity, the drunkenness, the sexual immorality of the epoch, and we understand how it is that, despite the overwhelming proofs we have that his character broke down later on the side of intellectual honesty, there is no good evidence to show that in his habits he departed from the



strict standards of conduct to which his non-conformist parents had trained him. He must have come into fairly close contact with the disreputable *Fourth Estate* of the period from 1700 to 1730, but he was himself no drunkard or blasphemer. The few stray charges of immorality, unsupported and almost negligible, belong, if they belong anywhere, to the period before he became a journalist and an agent of the government. He stood aloof both from the chief men of letters of his time, from Addison and Steele and Swift, and from the rank and file of the hack-writers.

The moralist to be is easily perceived in the early journalist; not so the future writer of fiction, to whom, with little or no cavil, we apply the term genius. Yet when in 1698 Defoe wrote the first of his tracts upon occasional conformity, he not only proved himself to be a true journalist by seizing on a timely subject, but he showed in his treatment of it that he had a good deal of the idealism, the lack of prudence, the tendency to go to extremes, characteristic of some types of genius. Ever since his own day critics have shown a disposition to regard Defoe as essentially bourgeois, but it is not usual in shopkeepers to assail men in office and to alienate their coreligionists and party associates by the advocacy of impractical standards in religion and politics.

This is what Defoe did when he wrote his *Enquiry*

*into the Occasional Conformity of Dissenters. With a Preface to the Lord Mayor.* Space is wanting for a full discussion of the event that occasioned this pamphlet and of the controversy to which it is devoted, but a few words on both topics seem necessary. Since much of the wealth and power of London was in the hands of the dissenters, it was natural that their chief men should aspire to office; but office-holding, as the laws then stood, was dependent upon a certain amount of outward conformity to the established church. In this dilemma the practice of what was called occasional conformity had its birth, and this practice was flagrantly illustrated when a newly elected lord mayor, Sir Humphrey Edwin, scandalized both city and nation by receiving the sacrament one Sunday morning according to the rites of the Church of England, and by appearing on that same Sunday afternoon with the regalia of his office at the Pinner's Hall meeting house. The conscience of the nation managed to remain smugly quiescent while absurd and unjust laws stood on the statute book and while dissenters were complying with them in a hypocritical and quiet fashion; but it was difficult for either churchman or dissenter to tolerate Sir Humphrey Edwin's flaunting defiance of propriety. Defoe, who was a sincere non-conformist at the time and a neophyte in controversy, naturally joined in the outcry against the lord mayor. His *Enquiry* was moderate and

acute and apparently honest in its contention that there was no available middle position between consistent non-conformity with the Church of England and complete conformity. But the facts remained that many good dissenters believed that there was such a position, and that these men were not to be convinced to the contrary by Defoe's dialectic. Calmly considering the matter to-day, we perceive that Defoe was right when he said that the occasional conformists were "*playing Bopeep* with God Almighty," but we can also perceive that the game was likely to be continued by well-to-do citizens so long as they could not hold office without playing it. The laws were foolish, the practice was wrong, the pamphlet was brilliant; but the net result was that Defoe alienated many of his fellow Presbyterians and yet was not in a position to reap tangible rewards for the service he did the zealous churchmen.

Three years later he made matters worse by re-issuing his tract with a new preface addressed somewhat impudently and unnecessarily to the distinguished non-conformist minister, John Howe. A little later still, when attempts were being made to pass a bill to put an end to the practice he had inveighed against, Defoe felt compelled to oppose the measure, thus passing over to the ranks of the low churchmen and the dissenters. In strict logic his course was not inconsistent, but his hair-splitting

made him an object of suspicion to both sides. In short, he displayed in the long-continued controversy a lack of practical wisdom which lost him the solid support of the only class in the community upon whom he could rely in his career as a journalist. Soon a special act of rash zeal, the writing and publication of *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, brought him to unmerited punishment. After that his rashness was much tempered with duplicity, and our respect for him steadily diminishes, although our sympathy increases on account of his misfortunes and of the courage with which he confronted them. We must not anticipate, however, and it is time that we should let this merchant and speculator, who did not become a professional writer until he was nearly forty, speak for himself as a controversialist in politics and morals.

*The Dilemma of the Occasional Conformists*<sup>1</sup>

“Further, speaking directly of the Sacraments, are they not the same thing, though differently administered in the Established Church, or in a Dissenting Church; and how can you take it as a civil

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<sup>1</sup>From “An Enquiry into the Occasional Conformity of Dissenters, in Cases of Preferment. With a Preface to the Lord Mayor, Occasioned by his carrying the Sword to a Conventicle.” 1697, pp. 17, 18. The tract was actually published at the beginning of 1698.

act in one place and a religious act in another? This is *playing Bopeep* with God Almighty, and no man can tell of them when they are about a civil action, and when about a religious. But to answer this pretense at once, Sacraments as Sacraments are religious acts, and can be no other; if you do not take it as a Sacrament, the case differs; but how can you say you do not take it as a Sacrament? An oath is to be taken in the sense of the imposer; and a Sacrament, which is a recognition of the most sacred of oaths, must be also taken in the sense of the imposer; if the person administering declared at the administration, *He did not give it as a Sacrament, but only gave you a bit of bread, and a draught of wine as a friend*, or the like, this was something; but can a minister deliver the Bread to you, and say, *The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ*, etc., and you kneeling with reverence take it as such, and repeat the responses at the Communion, and say *Amen* to the prayer, and say 'tis a civil action? This is such bantering with religion as no modest Christian can think of without horror."

"On<sup>2</sup> the other hand, if a man be called upon to be a magistrate, and has courage enough to follow the impartial dictates of his conscience, a query lies before him. What shall he do?

"The case is plain: *either refuse the honour, or run the risque*; the first indeed is the plainest and easiest way, and the ground of it is good, for he whose conscience dictates to him that the terms are sinful, may refuse the call, for preferments and

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<sup>2</sup> From the same. Pp. 26-28.

honours are a bait that some have refused on mere points of speculative philosophy; and 'tis hard, Christianity should not carry a man as far. Well, but perhaps a man has a mind to be a sheriff and lord mayor, and is a dissenter, or perhaps he really thinks 'tis his indispensable duty to serve his country, if he is called to that, or the like office; or perhaps he thinks 'tis a duty he owes his family to advance his children, and the like, and he is a profest dissenter. What shall he do? Let him boldly run the risque, or openly and honestly conform to the Church, and neither be ashamed of his honour, nor of his profession; such a man all men will value, and God will own. He need not fear carrying the sword to a conventicle or bringing the conventicle to his own house. But to make the matter a game, to dodge religions, and go in the morning to church, and in the afternoon to the meeting; to communicate in private with the Church of England, to save a penalty, and then go back to the dissenters and communicate again there—this is such a retrograde devotion, that I can see no colour of pretence for in all the Sacred Book.

“I have heard, indeed, that some, who are ministers of Dissenting Churches do, or did at the same time communicate with the Church of England. I do not dispute how far a minister may conform as a layman, tho' he cannot as a clergyman; but how any dissenting minister can conform as a layman, and at the same time execute a pastoral charge over a congregation, whom he teaches to separate from the Church in a lay-communion, I cannot imagine.



“’Tis not, as I have already noted, conformity or non-conformity, that I am discoursing; but ’tis conformity and non-conformity at the same time, in one and the same person, *that is the point*; and doing this for a secular end, to save a penalty, and privately; and then as being ashamed of it, to go back and sit down as not having done it at all; and a Church Society admitting this without taking notice of it. These are the contradictions I insist upon, and rather wish than expect to see rectified.”

Further quotations from his writings upon occasional conformity would doubtless make the controversy clearer to the reader and at the same time illustrate more abundantly Defoe’s powers of argumentation and his capacity to appeal in a clear simple style to the classes of men likely to buy his pamphlets from the book-shops and the hawkers. Controversies of all sorts lose their interest, however, and if Defoe were not continually dropping into anecdote or into an autobiographical or a historical treatment of his subject, students of his controversial writings would be much more fatigued by them than has actually been the case with one investigator who has read and reread hundreds of his forgotten tracts. It is passages such as the following that help to make interesting to readers of historical and sociological bent pamphlets which would otherwise be hopelessly tedious.

*Drunkenness in England*<sup>3</sup>

"Drunkenness, that brutish vice; a sin so sordid, and so much a force upon nature, that had God Almighty enjoined it as a duty, I believe many a man would have ventured the loss of Heaven, rather than have performed it. The pleasure of it seems to be so secretly hid, that wild heathen nations know nothing of the matter; 'tis only discovered by the wise people of these northern countries, who are grown proficient in vice, philosophers in wickedness, who can extract a pleasure to themselves in losing their understanding, and make themselves sick at heart for their diversion.

"If the history of this well-bred vice was to be written, 'twould plainly appear that it begun among the gentry, and from them was handed down to the poorer sort, who still love to be like their betters. After the restitution of King Charles the Second, when drinking the King's health became the distinction between a Cavalier and a Roundhead, drunkenness *began its reign*, and it has reigned almost forty years. The gentry caressed this beastly vice at such a rate, that no companion, no servant was thought proper, unless he could bear a quantity of wine; and to this day 'tis added to<sup>4</sup> the character of a man, as an additional title, when you would speak well of him, 'He is an honest drunken fellow'; as if his drunkenness was a recommendation of his

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<sup>3</sup> From "The Poor Man's Plea, In Relation to all the Proclamations, Declarations, Acts of Parliament, &c. Which Have been, or shall be made, or publish'd, for a Reformation of Manners, and suppressing Immorality in the Nation." 1698, pp. 13-16.

<sup>4</sup> The original has "to to."

honesty. From the practice of this nasty faculty, our gentlemen have arrived to the teaching of it; and that it might be effectually preserved to the next age, have very early instructed the youth in it. Nay, so far has custom prevailed, that the top of a gentleman's entertainment has been to make his friend drunk; and the friend is so much reconciled to it, that he takes that for the effect of his kindness, which he ought as much to be affronted at, as if he had kicked him down stairs. Thus 'tis become a science; and but that the instruction proves so easy, and the youth too apt to learn, possibly we might have had a college erected for it before now. The further perfection of this vice among the gentry will appear in two things: that 'tis become the subject of their glory, and the way of expressing their joy for any public blessings. 'Jack,' said a gentleman of very high quality, when after the debate in the House of Lords, King William was voted into the vacant throne; 'Jack,' (says he) 'God damn ye, Jack, go home to your Lady, and tell her we have got a Protestant King and Queen; and go and make a bonfire as big as a house, and bid the butler make ye all drunk, ye dog.' Here was sacrificing to the Devil, for a thanksgiving to God. Other vices are committed as vices, and men act them in private, and are willing to hide them; but drunkenness they are so fond of, that they will glory in it, boast of it, and endeavour to promote it as much as possible in others.<sup>5</sup> . . . And whoever gives himself the trouble to reflect on the custom of our gentlemen in their families encouraging and promoting this vice of drunkenness among the poor

<sup>5</sup> A few lines are omitted on account of their coarseness.

commons, will not think it a scandal upon the gentry of England, if we say, that the mode of drinking, as 'tis now practised, had its original from the practice of the country gentlemen, and they again from the court."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In his *Review* for December 26, 1704, Defoe referred to this tract as follows:

"'Tis now 8 years since I first had the misfortune to anger my masters the magistrates, by writing a little book, called, *The Poor Man's Plea*, against all the Proclamations, or Acts of Parliament for *Reformation*; wherein the honest poor man protests against being set in the stocks by a drunken justice; or fined for swearing, by a magistrate, with a *G—d D—n him, let the dog pay for it*. Nay, and tho' an honest, learned, and judicious clergyman was pleased to do that book more honour than its author deserved, by taking it into the pulpit with him, 'tis plain he has been censured for the sermon, and is hated to this day, by all the leading men of the Parish of St. J——, not far from the city of London."

## CHAPTER IV

FROM THE KING'S CLOSET TO THE PILLORY BY "THE  
SHORTEST WAY"—1701-1703

**WE** LEFT Defoe thriving as a manufacturer of bricks and pantiles and with at least a fair reputation as a projector and an able controversialist. This reputation was probably somewhat enhanced when, in the autumn of 1700, he began to discuss in several tracts the crisis in English and European affairs caused by the will of Charles II of Spain, which devolved upon the Duke of Anjou the immense territories of the Spanish crown. He lent hearty support to King William's foreign policy, and he displayed equal zeal in his protests against the corrupt methods used by moneyed men, particularly stock-jobbers, to control seats in Parliament. Perhaps he might have gone on writing such tracts indefinitely, and he might have formed with the leading Whig politicians even closer relations than those of which we have hints, without attracting the notice of the king and making his name a household word throughout England, had he not written two bold and popular performances

—one a satire in verse, the other a short address, or memorial, in prose.

The first was the most famous of all his poems, *The True-Born Englishman*, which appeared in January, 1701, and was widely circulated both in authorized and in pirated editions.<sup>1</sup>

So pleased was he with its success that for some years afterward he liked to print on his title-pages the legend, "By the Author of the True-Born Englishman." He wrote his satire in reply to *The Foreigners* of a later journalistic rival, John Tutchin, who had given coarse expression to the widespread discontent with the foreign-born king. Making Dryden his model, our Whig bard not only defended his hero William, but protested effectively against the folly of a hybrid people like the English priding themselves on their un-mixed blood and indulging in attacks on aliens. His verse-pamphlet was overlong and unpolished, but it was very effective, and it seems to have led to a personal introduction to the king, of which the tradesman-poet was immensely proud. He has

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<sup>1</sup>The satire may be read in several modern editions of Defoe's works and in volumes of selections from his writings. Its most famous lines are:

"Wherever God erects a house of prayer,  
The Devil always builds a chapel there,  
And 'twill be found upon examination,  
The latter has the largest congregation."



dropped vague hints that he was employed by William, and later, when he was under examination for writing *The Shortest Way*, he was suspected of having knowledge of important political secrets; but we really know nothing about the matter, and we must content ourselves with the guess that he served the king as an agent to gather public sentiment with regard to political questions much as he afterward served Robert Harley.

The statesman just mentioned, who at the time was speaker of the House of Commons, was closely connected with Defoe's *Legion's Address*, the prose memorial to which reference has been made. Certain Kentish supporters of William's foreign policy had delivered to the Tory Commons, hostile to that policy, an extensively signed petition asking for a change of attitude. This was resented by the House, and the presenters of the petition were ordered into custody. Great popular indignation was aroused, to which Defoe, acting as an anonymous tribune, gave expression in *Legion's Address*, so called because the bold and rather demagogic protest against the high-handed actions and claims of the Commons was signed "Our name is Legion, and we are Many." There is some discrepancy in the accounts of the manner in which this manifesto was presented to the speaker—Defoe asserted that it was delivered to Harley in person by the writer thereof guarded by about sixteen gentlemen of quality—but

it is at least certain that it was widely circulated in print, and that many replies were made to it. It is also certain that the daring document was not displeasing to the court, and that the Commons heeded its warnings. The Kentish worthies were soon released; Defoe had a seat of honor at a banquet given to them in London; and, good journalist that he was, he made capital of the whole affair in subsequent pamphlets.

We may take 1701, the year of *The True-Born Englishman* and of *Legion's Memorial*, as marking perhaps the highest stand in popular estimation attained by Defoe during his own lifetime. His pantile business was apparently prospering and he was paying off his debts, he was encouraged by royal patronage, and he was regarded by the Whigs as an important champion of popular liberties, although some of his fellow dissenters must have viewed with suspicion his course in connection with the vexed question of occasional conformity. Of the many thousand pages he devoted to political subjects, probably nothing sets him in a better light as a fair-minded patriot, a well-informed student of history and a weighty reasoner on political problems, than the pamphlet written at the close of this year under the title of *The Original Power of the Collective Body of the People of England, Examined and Asserted*.

The next year, 1702, saw a great change in De-

foe's fortunes. His patron, King William, died in March, and, with the accession of Queen Anne, the extreme leaders of the high church party thought that their time had come. Silly clergymen led the van with hysterical denunciations of the dissenters. Defoe, who would possibly have preferred to increase his reputation by the poems he continued to issue, was inevitably drawn into giving more and more of his time to prose tracts devoted to the ecclesiastical situation. Among these, besides a fresh contribution to the debate upon occasional conformity, were a very strong pamphlet entitled *A New Test of the Church of England's Loyalty*, and one of the most famous of all his fugitive performances, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, which was published at the close of 1702 and speedily brought him under the displeasure of the authorities.

His *Shortest Way* was indeed a short way, being no less than a proposal put in the mouth of a high-church zealot that the dissenters should be "rooted out" of the nation. It was meant, of course, to be an ironical *reductio ad absurdum* of the position of the "high-flyers." Unfortunately, however, some bigots applauded the tract, the dissenters were frightened, and everybody condemned the hoax when it was discovered to be one. The Tory government determined to prosecute the pamphleteer on the ground that he had written a scandalous and

sedition libel calculated to disturb the public peace by inculcating the belief that the dominant party intended to crush a large section of its opponents. When he learned of his danger, Defoe went into hiding, and on January 10, 1703, the Earl of Nottingham issued an advertisement for his arrest, describing him as "a middle-sized spare man, about forty years old, of a brown complexion, and dark brown colored hair, but wears a wig; a hooked nose, a sharp chin, gray eyes, and a large mole near his mouth."

The man answering this description was finally arrested on May 20, 1703, at the house of a French weaver in Spitalfields. How he evaded the officers of the law so long is not known, but it is certain that he made pathetic though vain appeals to his persecutors, the prospect of pillory and prison being more than he could stand. He was thrown into Newgate, vigorously but vainly examined in the hope that he would reveal important political secrets, tried, unfairly, he claimed, and sentenced to pay a fine of two hundred marks, to stand three times in the pillory, to be imprisoned during the queen's pleasure, and to furnish securities for his good behavior for seven years.

Futile attempts were made by friends and other persons interested in his case—among them William Penn—to save him from the indignity of the pillory, but when he was actually exposed, the mob

treated him as a hero, and his spirited *Hymn to the Pillory* was read with sympathy and applause. On more than one occasion during his trying experiences he had given signs of losing his nerve, but on the whole he stood the test well, and he employed himself in prison with writing fresh pamphlets and with supervising a genuine collection of his works, which was to compete with a pirated edition issued a few months before. Probably neither he nor any one else perceived what was likely to be the worst result of the treatment given him. The student of his career sees plainly that the sense of injustice aroused by the disproportion between his offense and his punishment, the feeling that he had been socially disgraced shortly after his ambitions had been aroused by the success of some of his writings and by his kind reception at the hands of King William, and the knowledge that his pantile business had been ruined and his affairs in general greatly embarrassed by his absconding and imprisonment, rankled in Defoe's mind and heart and gradually warped his moral nature until he persuaded himself that it was right to adopt any disguise that would enable him to publish without danger and to support any cause or party from which he could get the money needed for the maintenance of his large family. He gradually awoke to the fact that his public disgrace had condemned him to the subterranean life of a political agent and

journalistic hack, and, man of genius that he was, he proceeded to play the part with magnificent effrontery and duplicity. The pillorying of men of letters is in itself a sign of the essential brutality of Defoe's generation; in Defoe's case it was also the regrettable prelude to the ruin of a remarkable character. Yet, as so often happens, one is left wondering whether society has not profited from the loss undergone by the individual. If Defoe had continued to flourish as a pantile manufacturer, and if he had become a great force in politics, would he have been likely to write *Robinson Crusoe*? Perhaps instead of trying to answer this unanswerable question it will be well to give three quotations from the pamphlets of this period, the first illustrating that vein of superstition which crops up again in *Robinson Crusoe* and in the books on occult subjects written by Defoe in his old age, the second and third representing Defoe's most famous pamphlet, *The Shortest Way*, in which his great powers of irony found their most brilliant and most disastrous expression.

### *Some Remarkable Providences\**

"I cannot dismiss this matter without making a few observations on the death of this unhappy man ;

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<sup>2</sup> From "The Present State of Jacobitism Considered, in Two Querys. 1. What Measures the French King will take with respect to the Person and Title of the Pretended Prince of Wales. 2. What the Jacobites in England ought to do on the same account." 1701, pp. 20-22.



[King James II] I am no dreamer of dreams nor observer of omens; but the conjunctions of periods of circumstances in the actions of princes, seem to have strong intimations in them of the secret concurrence of things with their causes.<sup>3</sup>

“Tis observed with some reflection by the curious in such enquiries, that the present young King of Swedland<sup>4</sup> fought the battle of Narva and with twenty thousand men, defeated a hundred and twenty thousand Muscovites on the same day of the year that the Czar had sworn to the peace between the two nations, which he perfidiously broke without any provocation.

“It has often been observed also, that Oliver Cromwell died the same day of the year, that he fought two famous battles against his sovereign, the battle of Dunbar, and the battle at Worster.<sup>5</sup>

“I crave leave to make only two particular remarks about periods of times in King James, and let others make reflections on them as they think fit.

“I omit the several ill omens at his coronation, as the tottering of the crown upon his head, which was endeavoured in vain to be set right by a certain bishop; the breaking of the canopy over his head, the picture of his head hung up in a sign in Grace Church Street, which blew down and broke in pieces, the arms of England blowing out of the

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<sup>3</sup> Defoe was very fond of giving lists of singular coincidences. Some occur in *Robinson Crusoe* and a long one will be found at the close of *Memoirs of a Cavalier*.

<sup>4</sup> Charles XII of Sweden defeated Peter the Great at Narva on November 30, 1700.

<sup>5</sup> Cromwell died September 3, 1658. Dunbar was fought in 1650; Worcester, in 1651.

royal standard on the Tower, all on his coronation day, and many such remarkable things which happened about that time.

"But the two following, I cannot but own are remarkable:

"1. That the very same day of the year that he ascended the throne, and that King Charles the Second died,<sup>6</sup> *whether fairly or not I will not examine*; the same day of the year he was voted abdicated by the House of Lords, and the throne declared vacant.<sup>7</sup>

"2. That he died the same day of the year that the city of London was destroyed by fire, the 3d of September; whether he had any hand in that destruction is a question I cannot resolve.<sup>8</sup>

"Some who are near related to the families who suffered under him, such as Colonel Sydeny,<sup>9</sup> Armstrong, Cornish, My Lord Russell, and the like, whose blood they lay at his door, make an observation that he died of a flux of blood both upward and downward, which continued till nature was perfectly exhausted, and then a lethargic vapour, as is usual in such cases, seized on him, in which he died.

"It is also remarkable, that to prevent the observation of his dying on the 3d of September, it has

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<sup>6</sup> February 6, 1685. The rumor that Charles II's death was not natural was much circulated by the Whigs.

<sup>7</sup> In 1689.

<sup>8</sup> James II died in France in 1700. The fire of London took place in 1666, and was often charged upon the Roman Catholics. This mean method of insinuating vile charges was too frequently employed by Defoe and by other controversialists of the time.

<sup>9</sup> The famous Algernon Sidney executed in 1683. For the cases of these victims, see Macaulay's *History of England*.

been carefully ordered, that from St. Germans<sup>10</sup> they write he was not quite dead the 5th. But upon better information I am assured he was taken with his last fit on the second, and died on the third, but continued warm an unusual time after his death, which is all the pretence from whence the last report can be justified, for he neither spake, stirred, nor could be perceived to breathe after the 3d.

"I have not ill nature enough to make satires upon the dead, nor to *mix the misfortunes of a man with his crimes*, and therefore, having given the remarks, I leave every one to his private opinion."

### *The Misdeeds of the Dissenters and the Lenity of the Church*<sup>11</sup>

"Sir Roger L'Estrange tells<sup>12</sup> us a story in his collection of fables, of the cock and the horses. The cock was gotten to roost in the stable, among the horses, and there being no racks, or other conveniences<sup>13</sup> for him, it seems he was forced to roost upon the ground; the horses jostling about for room, and putting the cock in danger of his life, he gives them this grave advice, 'Pray, gentlefolks, let us stand still, for fear we should tread upon one another.'

"There are some people in the world, who now they are unperched, and reduced to an equality with other people, and under strong and very just apprehensions of being further treated as they de-

<sup>10</sup> St. Germain's.

<sup>11</sup> From "The Shortest-Way with the Dissenters: or Proposals for the Establishment of the Church." 1702, pp. 1-8.

<sup>12</sup> The first edition reads *tell*.

<sup>13</sup> The original, *Conveniencies*.

serve, begin, with Æsop's cock, to preach up peace and union, and the Christian duties of moderation, forgetting that, when they had the power in their hands, those graces were strangers in their gates.

"It is now near fourteen years,<sup>14</sup> that the glory and peace of the purest and most flourishing Church in the world has been eclipsed, buffeted, and disturbed by a sort of men who God in his providence has suffered to insult over her and bring her down; these have been the days of her humiliation and tribulation. She has borne with an invincible patience the reproach of the wicked, and God has at last heard her prayers, and delivered her from the oppression of the stranger.

"And now they find their day is over, their power gone, and the throne of this nation possessed by a royal, English, true, and ever-constant member of, and friend to, the Church of England. Now they find that they are in danger of the Church of England's just resentments; now they cry out peace, union, forbearance, and charity, as if the Church had not too long harboured her enemies under her wing, and nourished the viperous brood, till they hiss and fly in the face of the mother that cherished them.

"No, gentlemen, the time of mercy is past, your day of grace is over; you should have practised peace, and moderation, and charity, if you expected any yourselves.

"We have heard none of this lesson for fourteen years past. We have been huffed and bullied with your Act of Toleration; you have told us that you are the Church established by law, as well as others;

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<sup>14</sup> I. e., since the Revolution of 1688.

have set up your canting synagogues at our church-doors, and the Church and her members have been loaded with reproaches, with oaths, associations, abjurations, and what not; where has been the mercy, the forbearance, the charity, you have shown to tender consciences of the Church of England, that could not take oaths as fast as you made 'em; that having sworn allegiance to their lawful and rightful King, could not dispense with that oath, their King being still alive, and swear to your new hodge-podge of a Dutch Government? These ha'<sup>15</sup> been turned out of their livings, and they and their families left to starve; their estates double taxed to carry on a war they had no hand in, and you got nothing by. What account can you give of the multitudes you have forced to comply, against their consciences, with your new sophistical politics, who, like new converts in France, sin because they can't starve? And now the tables are turned upon you, you must not be persecuted, 'tis not a Christian spirit.

"You have butchered one king, deposed another king, and made a mock king of a third;<sup>16</sup> and yet you could have the face to expect to be employed and trusted by the fourth; anybody that did not know the temper of your party would stand amazed at the impudence, as well as folly, to think of it.

"Your management of your Dutch monarch, whom you reduced to a mere King of Cl[out]s, is enough to give any future princes such an idea of your principles, as to warn them sufficiently from coming into your clutches; and God be thanked, the

<sup>15</sup> The text of 1703 in the Collected Works reads *have*.

<sup>16</sup> Charles I, James II, William III.

Queen is out of your hands, knows you, and will have a care of you.

“There is no doubt but the supreme authority of a nation has in itself a power, and a right to that power, to execute the laws upon any part of that nation it governs. The execution of the known laws of the land, and that with but a weak and gentle hand neither, was all this fanatical party of this land have ever called persecution; this they have magnified to a height, that the sufferings of the Huguenots in France were not to be compared with. Now, to execute the known laws of a nation upon those who transgress them, after having first been<sup>17</sup> voluntarily consenting to the making those laws, can never be called persecution, but justice. But justice is always violence to the party offending, for every man is innocent in his own eyes. The first execution of the laws against dissenters in England was in the days of King James the First; and what did it amount to truly? The worst they suffered was at their own request, to let them go to New England and erect a new colony, and give them great privileges, grants, and suitable powers, keep them under protection, and defend them against all invaders, and receive no taxes or revenue from them. This was the cruelty of the Church of England; fatal lenity! ’Twas the ruin of that excellent prince, King Charles the First. Had King James sent all the Puritans in England away to the West Indies, we had been a national, unmixed Church; the Church of England had been kept undivided and entire.

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<sup>17</sup> *Having first been.* These three words were omitted by Defoe when he reissued the tract in his collection of 1703.



“To requite the lenity of the father, they take up arms against the son; conquer, pursue, take, imprison, and at last put to death the anointed of God, and destroy the very being and nature of government, setting up a sordid impostor, who had neither title to govern, nor understanding to manage, but supplied that want with power, bloody and desperate counsels, and craft without conscience.

“Had not King James the First withheld the full execution of the laws, had he given them strict justice, he had cleared the nation of them, and the consequences had been plain; his son had never been murdered by them, nor the monarchy overwhelmed; ’twas too much mercy shown them was the ruin of his posterity, and the ruin of the nation’s peace. One would think the dissenters should not have the face to believe that we are to be wheedled and canted into peace and toleration, when they know that they have once requited us with a civil war, and once with an intolerable and unrighteous persecution for our former civility.

“Nay, to encourage us to be easy with them, ’tis apparent that they never had the upper hand of the Church, but they treated her with all the severity, with all the reproach and contempt that was possible. What peace and what mercy did they show the loyal gentry of the Church of England in the time of their triumphant Commonwealth? How did they put all the gentry of England to ransom, whether they were actually in arms for the King or not, making people compound for their estates, and starve their families? How did they treat the clergy of the Church of England, sequestered the ministers, devoured the patrimony of the Church,

and divided the spoil by sharing the Church lands among their soldiers, and turning her clergy out to starve? Just such measures as they have meted<sup>18</sup> should be measured to them again.

“Charity and love is the known doctrine of the Church of England, and ’tis plain she has put it in practice towards the dissenters, even beyond what they ought, till she has been wanting to herself, and in effect, unkind to her own sons; particularly in the too much lenity of King James the First, mentioned before. Had he so rooted the Puritans from the face of the land, which he had an opportunity early to ha’<sup>19</sup> done, they had not had the<sup>20</sup> power to vex the Church as since they have done.”

*What Should Be Done with the Dissenters?*<sup>21</sup>

“To talk of the difficulty is to frighten ourselves with chimeras and notions of a powerful party, which are indeed a party without power. Difficulties often appear greater at a distance than when they are searched into with judgment, and distinguished from the vapours and shadows that attend them.

“We are not to be frightened with it; this age is wiser than that by all our own experience and theirs too; King Charles the First had early suppressed this party if he had took more deliberate measures. In short, ’tis not worth arguing to talk of their arms. Their Monmouths, and Shaftesburys, and Argyles are gone, their Dutch sanctuary

<sup>18</sup> The original has *mete*; the text of 1703, *meted*.

<sup>19</sup> The text of 1703, *have*.

<sup>20</sup> So the text of 1703; the original reads, *they had not the*.

<sup>21</sup> From the same, pp. 15-23.

is at an end, Heaven has made way for their destruction, and if we do not close with the divine occasion, we are to blame ourselves, and may remember that we had once an opportunity to serve the Church of England, by extirpating her implacable enemies, and having let slip the minute that Heaven presented, may experimentally complain, *Post est occasio calva*.<sup>22</sup>

“Here are some popular objections in the way:—

“As first, the Queen has promised them to continue them in their tolerated liberty, and has told us she will be a religious observer of her word.

“What her Majesty will do we cannot help; but what, as the Head of the Church, she ought to do, is another case. Her Majesty has promised to protect and defend the Church of England, and if she cannot effectually do that without the destruction of the dissenters, she must, of course, dispense with one promise to comply with another. But to answer this cavil more effectually. Her Majesty did never promise to maintain the toleration to the destruction of the Church; but it is upon supposition that it may be compatible with the well-being and safety of the Church, which she had declared she would take especial care of. Now if these two interests clash, 'tis plain her Majesty's intentions are to uphold, protect, defend, and establish the Church, and this we conceive is impossible.

“Perhaps it may be said that the Church is in no immediate danger from the dissenters, and therefore 'tis time enough. But this is a weak answer.

“For first, if a danger be real, the distance of it

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<sup>22</sup> The original, *Calvo*.

is no argument against, but rather a spur to quicken us to prevention, lest it be too late hereafter.

“And 2dly, here is the opportunity, and the only one perhaps that ever the Church had, to secure herself, and destroy her enemies.

“The representatives of the nation have now an opportunity; the time is come which all good men ha’ wished for, that the gentlemen of England may serve the Church of England; now they are protected and encouraged by a Church of England Queen.

“What will you do for your sister in the day that she shall be spoken for?

“If ever you will establish the best Christian Church in the world; if ever you will suppress the spirit of enthusiasm; if ever you will free the nation from the viperous brood that have so long sucked the blood of their mother;<sup>23</sup> if ever<sup>24</sup> you will leave your posterity free from faction and rebellion, this is the time.

“This is the time to pull up this heretical weed of sedition that has so long disturbed the peace of our Church, and poisoned the good corn.

“But, says another hot and cold objector, this is renewing fire and faggot, reviving the act *De Heret[ico] Comburendo*. This will be cruelty in its nature, and barbarous to all the world.

“I answer ’tis cruelty to kill a snake or a toad in cold blood, but the poison of their nature makes it a charity to our neighbours to destroy those creatures, not for any personal injury received, but for pre-

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<sup>23</sup> In the original and in the text of 1703 all the clauses beginning with *if* form separate paragraphs.

<sup>24</sup> *Ever* is from the text of 1703.

vention; not for the evil they have done, but the evil they may do.

“Serpents, toads, vipers, &c., are noxious to the body, and poison the sensitive life; these poison the soul, corrupt our posterity, ensnare our children, destroy the vitals of our happiness, our future felicity, and contaminate the whole mass.

“Shall any law be given to such wild creatures? Some beasts are for sport, and the huntsmen give them advantages of ground; but some are knocked on the head by all possible ways of violence and surprise.

“I do not prescribe fire and faggot, but, as<sup>25</sup> Scipio said of Carthage, *Delenda<sup>26</sup> est Carthago*; they are to be rooted out of this nation, if ever we will live in peace, serve God, or enjoy our own. As for the manner, I leave it to those hands who have a right to execute God’s justice on the nation’s and the Church’s enemies.

“But if we must be frightened from this justice under the specious pretences and odious sense of cruelty, nothing will be effected. ’Twill be more barbarous and cruel to our own children and dear posterity when they shall reproach their fathers, as we do ours, and tell us, ‘You had an opportunity to root out this cursed race from the world under the favour and protection of a true English queen; and out of your foolish pity you spared them, because, forsooth, you would not be cruel; and now our Church is suppressed and persecuted, our religion trampled under foot, our estates plundered, our persons imprisoned and dragged to jails, gibbets, and scaffolds; your

<sup>25</sup> The original misprints *a*, and omits *the* two lines above.

<sup>26</sup> The original *Dilenda*.

sparing this Amalekite race is our destruction, your mercy to them proves cruelty to your poor posterity.'

"How just will such reflections be when our posterity shall fall under the merciless clutches of this uncharitable generation, when our Church shall be swallowed up in schism, faction, enthusiasm, and confusion; when our Government shall be devolved upon foreigners, and our monarchy dwindled into a republic.

"'Twould be more rational for us, if we must spare this generation, to summon our own to a general massacre, and as we have brought them into the world free, send them out so, and not betray them to destruction by our supine negligence, and then cry, 'It is mercy.'

"Moses was a merciful, meek man, and yet with what fury did he run through the camp, and cut the throats\* of three-and-thirty thousand of his dear Israelites that were fallen into idolatry; what was the reason? It was mercy to the rest to make these examples, to prevent the destruction of the whole army.

"How many millions of future souls we save from infection and delusion, if the present race of poisoned spirits were purged from the face of the land!

"'Tis vain to trifle in this matter, the light, foolish handling of them by mulcts, fines, &c.,—'tis their glory and their advantage. If the gallows instead of the Counter,<sup>27</sup> and the galleys instead of the fines, were the reward of going to a conventicle, to preach or hear, there would not be so many sufferers. The

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<sup>27</sup> A prison.



spirit of martyrdom is over; they that will go to church to be chosen sheriffs and mayors, would go to forty churches rather than be hanged.

“If one severe law were made and punctually executed, that whoever was found at a conventicle should be banished the nation, and the preacher be hanged, we should soon see an end of the tale. They<sup>28</sup> would all come to church, and one age would make us all one again.

“To talk of five shillings a month for not coming to the sacrament, and one shilling per week for not coming to church, this is such a way of converting people as never was known; this is selling them a liberty to transgress for so much money. If it be not a crime, why don’t we give them full license? And if it be, no price ought to compound for the committing it, for that is selling a liberty to people to sin against God and the Government.

“If it be a crime of the highest consequence both against the peace and welfare of the nation, the glory of God, the good of the Church, and the happiness of the soul, let us rank it among capital offences, and let it receive a punishment in proportion to it.

“We hang men for trifles, and banish them for things not worth naming; but an offence against God and the Church, against the welfare of the world and the dignity of religion, shall be bought off for five shillings<sup>29</sup>! This is such a shame to a Christian Government that ’tis with regret I transmit it to posterity.

“If men sin against God, affront his ordinances,

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<sup>28</sup> Not a new sentence in the original.

<sup>29</sup> The original, *5s.*

rebel against his Church, and obey the precepts of their superiors, let them suffer as such capital crimes deserve. So<sup>80</sup> will religion flourish, and this divided nation be once again united.

“And yet the title of barbarous and cruel will soon be taken off from this law too. I am not supposing that all the dissenters in England should be hanged or banished, but, as in cases of rebellions and insurrections, if a few of the ringleaders suffer, the multitude are dismissed; so, a few obstinate people being made examples, there is no doubt but the severity of the law would find a stop in the compliance of the multitude.”

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<sup>80</sup> Not a new sentence in the original.

## CHAPTER V

### IN HARLEY'S SERVICE—THE REVIEW—1703-1706

IT was long believed that Defoe remained in Newgate about eighteen months, from February, 1703, to August, 1704. The discovery, by the present writer, of the date of his capture, May 20, 1703, and the proof afforded by newspapers and the *Harley Papers*<sup>1</sup> that he was released by the end of October or the beginning of November, 1703, would seem to make it clear that he can not have remained in prison a full third of this time. This removes to the realm of legend the often repeated story that he founded while in durance his famous newspaper, the *Review*, and it relieves us from the necessity of supposing with the older biographers that the details of his personal experiences inserted in his book entitled *The Storm* (1704)<sup>2</sup>—a journalistic account of the ravages of the great tempest of November, 1703—were mere early illustrations of his faculty of inventing convincing realistic details.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a convenient designation for the important collection of letters and documents found in the Historical Mss. Commission's reports on the Mss. of the Duke of Portland (1897, 1899, 1907).

<sup>2</sup> Defoe also wrote a tract upon the great tempest, from which a selection is given at p. 66.

His release was effected by Robert Harley, who brought pressure to bear upon the lord treasurer, Godolphin, and the queen. Harley, then still speaker of the House, was planning for his own political advancement, and he had a clearer conception than any other statesman of the period of the important part the press might be made to play in politics. He recognized Defoe's ability as a journalist, and believed that the best way to secure his faithful service would be to work upon his sense of gratitude at this desperate crisis of his affairs. Moreover, he probably pitied the almost ruined prisoner, and thus was kind as well as shrewd. At any rate, he succeeded in attaching to his interests for the next decade, with an intermission of two years, one of the ablest journalists and most adroit political agents that has ever served a statesman. As we shall see, Defoe was not altogether faithful to his employer, but on the whole he repaid Harley's kindness.

At the close of 1703, although he wrote several controversial pamphlets, Defoe was doubtless mainly employed in trying to restore order to his finances. Some money was given him, probably as a bounty from the queen, but it is clear that he did not obtain from any source the five or six hundred pounds needed to "bind all the hands" of his more exorbitant creditors. There is evidence that in 1705 political foes used the claim of one of these

creditors as a basis for a warrant for Defoe's arrest in order that he might be forced to abate his activity as an election agent for the Whigs; and the poor debtor himself tells us in a tract of 1712 that for many years, through the malice of enemies and creditors, he has been compelled to deny himself the pleasure and benefit of attending divine service. His close intimacy with Harley, which began in the spring of 1704, cannot have been an unalloyed compensation, for, although it is plain that first and last a good deal of money passed from Harley's purse, or from the public treasury through Harley's good offices, into Defoe's pocket, and although the evidence points on the whole to considerate personal treatment of the agent by the statesman, nevertheless, owing to the bad standing of the pilloried journalist all intercourse between the two men had to be kept private. Defoe's visits were paid at night, and in his numerous letters he generally used a fictitious name. As he was a proud man, who liked to emphasize his standing as a gentleman, in the more technical sense of that word, his position must have been very trying to him, especially as Swift, whom he violently disliked, could serve Harley as pamphleteer and journalist and yet at the same time visit the minister as a friend.

Perhaps the most important service Defoe rendered Harley with his pen, certainly his most important public service as a journalist, was his estab-

lishment of his newspaper, the *Review*. The first number appeared on February 17, 1704, and the paper was continued, mainly as a tri-weekly and with some changes of name, through eight large volumes and a supplementary ninth volume, with comparatively slight intermissions, down to June 11, 1713. For the most part, each number consisted of four pages of two columns, distributed between an essay on some serious topic of the day, political, ecclesiastical, economic, and a lighter department, generally entitled *Advice from the Scandalous Club*, in which a supposititious society discussed various matters—frequently the editor's own affairs, or else the blunders committed by other journalists, or cases of matrimonial infelicity. Advertisements, chiefly of publications and quack medicines, filled a portion, rarely the whole, of the last page. The essay did not greatly exceed in length a leading editorial of to-day, and the total amount written by Defoe in a week—there is little indication of outside help—would not tax a prolific modern journalist; but when we consider the number of books and pamphlets the *Author* as the editor was then called, managed to write while conducting his paper, when we add his contributions to other newspapers, when we estimate the time consumed by his labors as a political agent, we see that his persistence in carrying on for nine years a journal that could not be made to pay, was not far from heroic. Perhaps



the most remarkable fact that emerges from a study of the *Review* is the regularity with which it appeared during the years when Defoe was residing in Scotland, and was hence dependent upon the mercies of the post. More important, however, is the fact that the paper was more moderate in tone, more straightforward in style, and more varied and sound in substance than any political journal that had been published in England. Fellow journalists, such as Tutchin of the *Observer* and Charles Leslie of the *Rehearsal*, waged war upon him; cultivated readers affected to despise him; Steele, Addison and Swift, all of whom learned from him, gained far more applause from contemporaries and have been more honored by posterity; but in influence upon the evolution of journalism and in range of information and practical mental power Defoe stands without a real rival among the editors of his time. The *Review* is not his literary monument—he has that in *Robinson Crusoe*—but it is a treasure house of materials for the student of history and economics. Unfortunately there is no absolutely complete set in existence, and even occasional volumes are rarely to be found; but all that we have of it should be reprinted in a convenient form, both as a tribute to a remarkable writer, and as a service to all persons interested in the age of Queen Anne.

After getting the *Review* well started, Defoe made horseback journeys as an election agent for

Harley, and then, after a break in their correspondence, we find the minister—Harley was now secretary of state in place of Nottingham—and the journalist in close relations that lasted for nearly three years. From July to November, 1705, Defoe made one of the most interesting of his circuits, gathering valuable information for his employer, escaping creditors' warrants, paying surreptitious visits to leading dissenters to hearten them in the Whig cause, and incidentally gathering much knowledge of the condition of rural England which stood him in good stead in later economic and topographical writings. Some of his experiences were reported to the readers of the *Review*, the editor being his own "special correspondent." All the while the poems, the tracts and even books, continued to appear with extraordinary frequency—among them the volume on the Great Storm already mentioned, the well-known economic pamphlet *Giving Alms No Charity*, the elaborate political allegory entitled *The Consolidator*, the impudent political satire *The Dyet of Poland*, and the second volume of his collected writings.

The year 1706 was marked by an interesting pamphlet in defense of his career, which had been sharply criticized by an unstable politician, Lord Haversham, by essays in favor of the proposed union between England and Scotland, by a discussion of a subject in which Defoe had a keen per-

sonal interest, to wit, the new legislation with regard to bankrupts, by the most ponderous of all his poems, his unread satire *Jure Divino*, and by one of the most realistic of all contributions to the literature of the supernatural, *A True Account of the Apparition of One Mrs. Veal*. The last named pamphlet was long thought to be a masterpiece of invention illustrating Defoe's power to give the effect of reality through a skilful use of details; but it has been shown by Mr. George A. Aitken that the tract deserves Sir Walter's praise, not because it is a convincing piece of fiction, but because it is a vivid and accurate bit of reporting. Defoe gave readers throughout England a circumstantial account of a ghost story current at Canterbury in the closing months of 1705; he invented little or nothing.

How now shall we be able to obtain by means of selections a clear idea of the activity and achievements of these three crowded years, and how shall we do this for later years when Defoe's bibliography becomes simply enormous? There is really no way except to declare the task hopeless, and to present a few passages chosen because of their own intrinsic interest and because they throw light on our author's versatility and illustrate his character. With this end in view we shall exhibit him as a lay-preacher on the lessons to be learned from the Great Storm, as a journalist endeavoring to enliven his pages with humor, as an economist interested in the

problems of poverty, as a political controversialist beset with enemies, some of whom were of sufficient influence to menace his fortunes, and finally as a would-be man of letters whose aspirations in the field of poetry were doomed to disappointment.

### *The Lesson of the Great Storm<sup>3</sup>*

"In public calamities, every circumstance is a sermon, and everything we see a preacher.

"The trembling habitations of an unthinking people preach to us, and might have made any nation in the world tremble but us; when we were rocked out of our sleep as children are rocked into it; and when the terrible hand of Sovereign Power rocked many a wretch from one sleep to another, and made a grave of the bed, without the ceremony of waking in the passage.

"The shattered palaces of our princes preach to us, and tell us aloud that without respect to dignity, he is able to put that dreadful text in execution; *that if a nation does wickedly, they shall be destroyed, both they and their King.*

"The fallen oaks, which stood before to tell us they were the longest lived of all God's creatures, preach to us, and tell us that the most towering object of human beauty and strength must lie humble and prostrate, when he is pleased to give a check to that splendor which was derived from his power.

"The wrecks of our navies and fleets preach to us,

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<sup>3</sup> From one of the rarest of Defoe's pamphlets, "The Lay-man's Sermon upon the Late Storm; Held forth at an Honest Coffee-House-Conventicle. Not so much a Jest as 'tis thought to be." 1704, pp. 5-7.

that 'tis in vain we pretend to be walled about by the ocean, and ride masters of the sea. And that, if he who bestowed that situation upon us thinks fit, he can make that element which has been our strength, and the increaser of our wealth, be the grave of our treasure, and the enemy of our commerce; he can put it into so violent agitation, by the blast of his mouth, that all our defence and the naval strength we have valued ourselves so much upon, shall at once be swallowed up in the mouth of our friend the sea; and we shall find our destruction in the very thing from which we expected our defence.

"Our seamen and soldiers, whose dead bodies embrace the English shores, preach aloud to us, that whenever we think fit to embark them on any design, which Heaven approves not of, he can blast the embryo, and devour those people whose hands are lifted up against justice and right.

"Also they preach to us, not to build our hopes of success upon the multitude of ships or men, who are thus easily reduced, and the strength of a whole nation brought to ruin in a moment.

"These are the monitors of our misfortunes, and, some of these admonitions would be well preached from the mouths of those whose talents as well as office gives them reason to do it, and us to expect it."

### *Early Journalistic Humor<sup>4</sup>*

"The gentleman with his virtuous bad wife took up so much of the time last sitting, the Society had

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<sup>4</sup> From "A Review of the Affairs of France: Purg'd from the Errors and Partiality of News-Writers and Petty-Statesmen, of all Sides." Tuesday, August 1, 1704, Vol. I, No. 43,

no leisure to hear several people that attended, but was obliged to put them off till to-day.

"Among these were several complainers against our brethren of the pen and ink, called News Writers.

"And first, a certain person who seemed to be in haste, desired to be called in.

"He told the Club he was an undertaker, a grave-jobber, a human raven, one that used to smell death, and croak at the door a week aforehand; and thought he need not be told when any man wanted a case of his office, but reading in the *Post-Boy* and *Flying Post*, July 27, that Sir Christopher Musgrave was dead,<sup>5</sup> away he run to the house to bespeak himself to serve the funeral. When he came there, he found the gentleman was alive, and being not so wary as he should have been in that case, he discovered his business, and was forc't to be very civil to the servants to avoid some ill usage.

"But this was not all. For whereas his interest was so great in the family before, that he made no question, if the person was dead, he was sure of the job; the unseasonable application so disoblged the family, that now he despairs of it. Wherefore he desired the Society to order the said News Writers to make him satisfaction for his loss.

"The Club, after hearing his complaint with a great deal of patience, told him, in short, it was their opinion there was no satisfaction at all due to him, and that he had nothing but what he ought to expect, for believing anything such people write."

p. 187, from the department entitled "Advice from the Scandalous Club."

<sup>5</sup> This politician, who sat in parliament forty-three years, died on July 29, 1704.



*The Undertaker's Case Continued*<sup>6</sup>

"The Society received the following letter from the gentleman undertaker, who, as we noted in our last, was sent of a fool's errand to Sir Christopher Musgrave's, to bespeak the burying him before he was dead, and thereby lost his interest in the family.

" 'Gentlemen,

" 'It has e'en happened, as I told you on Friday, I feared it would, for Sir Christopher is now dead, and I have missed the job, and all long of Mr. *Post-Boy*; tho' I have still the mortification to be told, that the great interest I had in the family, had certainly procured it me, had it not been for what I told you in my last.

" 'I must confess I cannot blame those (whose interest I depended upon) for opposing me, when I consider what a piece of folly I was guilty of; to give so much credit to a News Writer's word, as to go to a gentleman's house, and without the ceremony of asking how he did, solicit for the burying of him. However, all this misfortune being occasioned by the impudence of this News Writer, I hope the Society will consider of it, and do that justice to me, as they would to themselves, if the case was their own. I am,

" 'Gentlemen,

" 'Your humble Servant,

" 'POST-MORTEM FUNERAL

" 'July 30, 1704.'"

<sup>6</sup> From the same, Vol. I, No. 44, p. 192.

"The Club told him his complaint was good against the *Flying Post*, but not against the *Post-Boy*, because the latter corrected his mistake in his next paper; and they cannot agree to censure any body, that revising their papers will mend 'em themselves."

### *The "Scoundrel Trade" of Begging*

"Begging is the present most destructive grievance of our home trade, and the encouragement given it, by our foolish mistaken charity, is cutting our throats in trade. Of which I observe,

"1. If all the beggars of this nation had a charter to form themselves into a body, they would be the richest corporation in the kingdom.

"2. Every farthing given in the street, or at your door, tho' to the most impotent blind, and needy beggar, is just so much money contributed to the ruin of your native country, destruction of trade, and the entailing of idleness, luxury and misery, on our posterity.

"3. Begging, and all sorts of poverty, are easy to be supprest, and for ever prevented in this nation.

"4. The best, properest, and indeed the only objects of charity, and which those who are really disposed to do good, will find out, are poor and numerous families, who either by sickness, death, idleness, or other disasters, are deprived of the father, or head of the family, whose labour was their subsistence.

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<sup>7</sup> From the same, Saturday, December 23, 1704, Vol. I, No. 84, pp. 349-351.

“I have had some thoughts to employ one of the Monthly Supplements to this work, on this useful head, and lay down schemes there for the cure of these evils; but I cannot yet resolve. And as we have been a nation always obstinate in the errors of our fathers, I have long since concluded, the evil must go farther on, and reduce us to a much worse condition, than we are yet in, before we will concern ourselves in remedies that will be effectual.

“In short, the disease is corroded, the leprosy is in the walls; we are possest with the begging-evil; we have poor without begging, and beggars without poverty. Strange! That nature can be suppressed to so much meanness, to ask a man’s charity for mere covetousness, and stoop to beg without want.

“This scoundrel trade has got the start of thieving; I am persuaded, no man ever takes the highway, but from the case of the unjust steward—‘Dig I cannot and to beg I am ashamed. What shall I do?’ An English gentleman would presently have said to himself, ‘Do! What should you do? Get a horse, and a case of pistols; is not the highway wide enough?’ But, I believe, ’twas never known any man did this, that knew how to live without it. But how often have we known men that have stood with a broom in their hands to sweep a passage, and beg your alms for God-sake, leave 1000 pounds in gold behind them? Two or three famous instances of which we have now very lately; one of which has left 3000 *l.* to a charity.)

“And were it worth while, this paper could mark out some common beggars, that stand crying to you of poverty and blindness, that if they are not abused,

are fit to be masters of the company, and ought rather to relieve others, than ask a charity for God-sake. But of this by itself.

"I have been accosted already with some letters on this subject; and the gentlemen are a little haughtily clamorous upon my reproaching their charities to the workhouses, &c.

"I cannot end this digression, till I have shocked their confidence a little; and I leave them to answer me if they can.

"I allow, that any of our workhouses may be, and perhaps are a particular benefit or advantage to the city, town, or place where they are erected; and to be sure, they are so to the poor that are employed there, and children taken in, so that the outside of their charity is very specious and good; but the woe of trade be on you, ye hypocrites, who gild your follies with outside shams, while essentially and effectually, you eat out the bowels of your native country, starve the diligent hands that honestly labour for their bread; that having first turned numerous families into the street, you may pick up their ruined orphans for vagrants, and boast of their numbers, as an instance of your charity.

"Your houses of correction ought to be turned upon yourselves, and you should there perform the penance due to your short-sighted politics; you are the ruin of our laborious poor, the discouragers of industry, the foundation of poverty, and encrease of vagabonds.

"And that all these mysteries may be laid open, tho' I have lately more largely essayed it in a small tract, entitled, *Alms<sup>s</sup> no Charity, and Employing*

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<sup>s</sup> The title begins "Giving Alms."

*the Poor a Grievance to the Nation*, addressed to the House of Commons, and to which I would entreat any of the persons moved at this charge to make a fair reply; yet since perhaps this paper may be seen where that has not come, and the useful truth cannot be too often inculcated, I must take leave to repeat here one of the many arguments made use of there as follows:

“Our workhouses are all, or the most part, employed on our woolen manufacture. If<sup>9</sup> our London gentlemen will not be angry, this matter being no more pointed at them, than at any other, I crave leave to name our great workhouse in Bishopsgate-Street; the numerous poor entertained there, are employed in spinning of worsted; and I mistake, if I have not seen advertisements inviting people to buy yarn at their warehouse.

“Now unless these gentlemen can, or did find out some new market, some place of sale, where none of the woolen manufacture was vended before, or any other goods procured by our woolen manufacture, this must be the consequence: That for every skein of yarn spun in this workhouse, there must be a skein the less spun in some other place, and by some other poor family that spun before.

“Suppose they were to make a piece of baize in Bishopsgate-Street; for every piece of baize so made, there must be a piece the less made at Colchester.

“And what’s all this to the poor? Or what is it to be called? ’Tis only transposing the manufacture, and taking the bread out of the mouths of the poor of Essex, and putting it into the mouths of the

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<sup>9</sup> Not a new sentence in the original.

poor of Middlesex; setting the vagabond poor at work, and starving the diligent poor; forcing our beggars to work, and driving their working families to beg; besides abundance of preposterous errors in trade; which, as consequences of this, I have at large set down in the tract above-mentioned; to which I refer, and freely challenge them to answer."

*A Harrassed Advocate of Peace*<sup>10</sup>

"I have spent some time, and some people I find think too much, on the subject of peace;<sup>11</sup> I have been moving and inviting all parties to put their helping hands to this necessary work, and principally to be careful to choose such gentlemen to represent them in the approaching parliament, as are blessed with those healing principles, which seem particularly and absolutely necessary at this extraordinary juncture, AND I HOPE THEY HAVE DONE IT.

"If in the negative part of my discourse on this head, it has come in my way to tell who they *should not* choose, by way of direction to the affirmative. *who they should*, and if it has been impossible to do this, without running full butt against the Gentlemen<sup>12</sup> of the 134, they must excuse me, and blame

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<sup>10</sup> From the same, Vol. II, pp. 213-216. No. 54, Saturday, July 7, 1705.

<sup>11</sup> Defoe meant political and ecclesiastical peace at home, not peace with France.

<sup>12</sup> The original has *Gentlement*. The "134" were the "Tackers," i. e., the extreme high-church Tories, who in 1705 endeavored in vain to pass the bill against occasional conformity by "tacking" it to the Land-Tax Bill. See Wilson's *Defoe*, II, 293 et seq.



their putting themselves just in the way of our peace, that we could not pursue it, without driving over them.

“But I am unhappily embarrassed now with a whole party, and assaulted with all manner of malice, for endeavouring to show the beauty of that heavenly temper these men want, and which in particular they hate.

“It would really be too much satire upon the gentlemen of the other side, if I should only publish their own letters to me upon the subject; some that are merely diverting I may give the world a sight of; but some that are villainous and base, I conceal for the sake of that peace I would fain move them to by my example.

“’Twould even reflect upon the nation in general, if I should give the particulars of about 20 to 30 letters, most of which threaten my life, and the world might think England coming into the mode of Italy. Indeed we have seen too much of this method lately, and justice seems to wait but a few weeks to make a sad example from a set of assassins, the murderers of the Scotchman of Queenborough.

“To all the gentlemen who are so exceeding angry at me for inviting them to peace, as to threaten my throat, and the like, I make this serious request, Let them step to Maidstone Gaol, and there discourse a little with their brother murderers; and if their condition pleases them, let them follow their steps if they can.

“Indeed, gentlemen, the mean despicable author of this paper is not worth your attempting his cor-

rection at the price; gaols, fetters, and gibbets, are odd melancholy things; for a gentleman to dangle out of the world in a string,<sup>13</sup> has something so ugly, so awkward, and so disagreeable in it, that you cannot think of it without some regret, and then the reflection will be very harsh, that this was for killing a poor mortified author, one that the Government had killed before.<sup>14</sup> It can never be worth your while, gentlemen, and therefore he hopes you will content yourselves with telling him so, and let him alone to time and age, which is hastening upon us all, and will certainly at last do the work to your hand.

“Presuming upon the prevalency of these arguments, and the sovereignty of your reason as men, your religion as Protestants, and your native generosity of temper, as Englishmen.

“I move about the world unguarded and unarmed, a little stick not strong enough to correct a dog, supplies the place of Mr. O[bservato]r’s<sup>15</sup> great oaken-towel, a sword sometimes perhaps for decency, but it is all harmless to a mere nothing; can do no hurt anywhere but just at the tip of it, called the point—— And what’s that in the hand of a feeble author?

“Let him alone, gentlemen, and have patience, you’ll all come to be of his mind ere long; and then if you had killed him, you would have been sorry for it.

“The days are at hand, I doubt, when you will

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<sup>13</sup> The original reads *Strang*.

<sup>14</sup> A facetious way of referring to his being sentenced in 1703 to give security for his good behavior.

<sup>15</sup> John Tutchin, editor of the *Whig Observer*.

all own, he that persuaded you to peace was in the right of it, and that having despised peace at home, God Almighty in mercy to you, will deny you peace abroad.

“I can much easier jest with the impotent rage of the enemies, to the public peace, threatening to kill me, than I can with the serious and sad apprehensions I receive from a protracted war, from broken measures, backward preparations, uncertain confederates, and the like.

“And yet this bullying method is not the only treatment the author of this has to complain of—— But now he has had a storm of a more scandalous assassination, studying to ruin and embroil him; crowds of sham actions, arrests, sleeping debates in trade of 17 years’ standing revived; debts put in suit after contracts and agreements under hand and seal; and which is worse, writs taken out for debts, without the knowledge of the creditor, and some after the creditor has been paid; diligent solicitations of persons not inclined to sue, pressing them to give him trouble; others offering to buy assignments of debts, that they might be sued; for others to turn setters and informers to betray him into the hands of trouble; collateral bonds sued, where the securities have been resigned and accepted.

“It would take up too much of the reader’s time, to trouble the world with the barbarous treatment shown a man just stripped naked by the Government; ’tis like suing a man just ransomed from Algier; and could I descend to particulars, would be too moving to be read.

“That this is all for the party; that this is a

pique at the subject, as well as the author; speak conscience and tell us, Why were none of these things done before?

“Under all these designed mischiefs, a diligent report has been raised, That this unhappy author was carried to Newgate, and some have been so kind to go thither to visit him.

“Ill tongues may do much; but I cannot but tell a certain gentleman, who has offered 100*l.* to have it so, that it will hardly be in his power to effect it.

“Pardon me, gentlemen, to enquire into the impotence of this malice, a gaol would not check this paper. Perhaps, if you could bring it to pass, it might furnish me with leisure to perform it better.

“To those whose designs are different, they may see who they gratify; and I appeal to all the world, What in this Paper has merited this persecution?

“Were all the prosecutions legal, debts just, and circumstances requiring, yet really, gentlemen, when you reflect in what hands he has been in, 'tis something barbarous, common compassion leads men to bear with men, whose houses have been burned, or who by public disaster are disabled; if his house has not been burned, it has been plundered.

“Will you have no compassion? Well, gentlemen, this must all they expect, who presume to venture in plainness and without flattery to tell men their crimes; neither will all this restrain his pen from writing, the truth depending upon it; that the Author of that truth, will one time or other, own at least the work, if not the unworthy author.

“Suits at law, gaol, murther, assassination, and all that malice can contrive, are therefore without their influence on me; I avoid the first, and con-

temn the last; the law, I trust, will protect me from the first; and I freely run the venture of the last, and so proceed to the next method, now taking with me—and that is banter, raillery and reflection.

“And what good does all this scribbling do? says one, you had as good let it alone. And whereas you pretend much of the public service being the end, and you would not write but for the public service; since there is no public service in it, pray show your sincerity by laying it down.

“The difficulty here lies in what we shall understand by the public service, and doing good.

“I understand persuading us all to be at peace with one another, to be a public service, and doing good. These gentlemen perhaps understand it another way, I am sorry for them; without doubt, they<sup>16</sup> that believe intestine discords, civil dissension, strife and oppression, the needful help to this nation’s happiness, differ from me, and I from them, and I doubt shall always do so.

“If I am mistaken in the subject, I ought to be convinced, that peace and union is not for the public good; that ’tis better for us to be pulling one another to pieces, tearing and destroying one another, and the like.

“Now, if these gentlemen will undertake to prove that laws for persecution of dissenters, feuds and breaches in the Legislature, invading privileges, heats, animosities and violence of parties, are particularly for the public service, and help to the public good:

“If they will make it out, that delaying supplies, and retarding preparations, wounding public credit,

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<sup>16</sup> The original has *they they*.

and weakening our hands, would be particularly encouraging to our confederates abroad, and support better the Protestant cause :

“If they can prove, that quarrels, heats, feuds, and dangerous experiments, will help us to beat the French ; that being divided at home, we shall be the better prepared to defend ourselves against invasion from abroad :

“If they can demonstrate, that to be all to pieces in our civil interests, is the best method to deprive the parties abroad of all hopes that their cause will one day or other be revived among us ; that 'tis *The Shortest Way* to close all their expectations ; that while we are jangling and clashing, writing and fighting in parties at home, it will effectually foreclose the French in their designs of universal monarchy, and sink their expectation of reducing us by force :

“If these things can be made out, I confess I shall be in the dark, and will immediately acknowledge I am in a strange mistake, that all my notions of things are wrong, that I have received false ideas of the public affairs ; for indeed I did not know that when our Lord said, ‘A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand,’ that the kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, were excepted out of the general rule, with a *cujus contrarium verum est*.

“Now as I am, and always shall be ready to receive, and freely accept the informations of men, more knowing than myself, I am in daily expectation of something very considerable upon this subject, which will make out these enigmas, unriddle all this mystery, and prove that Her Majesty was mistaken in her speech for peace and union, that we are all



wrong in our construction of the text above; and so by consequence, that I am the Lord knows what of an incendiary, a Jacobite, and a public enemy to the nation, and when this comes, I am content to be called so."<sup>17</sup>

*Defoe Defends Himself Against Lord Haversham*<sup>18</sup>

"But to come to particulars; the Vindicator offers here, 1st, That the Author of these Papers is not the only person concerned in them. And 2ly, He is convinced upon enquiry, from whence he has both his encouragement and instructions, and on the foot of these suggestions, I suppose he can justify the terms afterwards bestowed on this author, of mean, mercenary, and prostitute.

"I most humbly ask his pardon for saying, necessity forcing me to it in vindication of truth, to his

<sup>17</sup> This selection gives the entire reading matter of the number of the *Review* from which it is taken. Advertisements fill the fourth page, save for three lines in the first column. There are four advertisements—one addressed to the subscribers for Defoe's poem, *Jure Divino*, which was in press; one containing proposals for "a Perpetual Assurance Office" (life insurance); one praising the "Royal Essence for the Hair of the Head and Perriwigs"; and one recommending "Wasse's Elixir for the Gout and Rheumatism" and other diseases, a remedy which could be bought at numerous shops, "Price Three Shillings the Half-pint, with Printed Directions."

<sup>18</sup> From "A Reply to a Pamphlet Entitled, The L—d H—'s Vindication of his Speech, &c. By the Author of the Review." 1706, pp. 6-10.

John Thompson, 1647-1710; made a baronet, 1673; created Baron Haversham, 1696, by William III; under Queen Anne he usually acted with the Tories, and Defoe frequently felt called upon to oppose him. The tract from which this extract is taken is a continuation of a controversy begun the preceding fall by some remarks by Defoe on a speech of Lord Haversham's.

misfortune and MINE TOO, not one word of these articles happens to have the least shadow OF TRUTH in them.

“That no man in England has, or ever had, any concern, in writing the paper called the *Review*, other than the Author, known and reputed to be so, I take the liberty to assure him, is a certain, positive, literal, and direct truth, and that not so much as subject, manner, time of subject, or any part of, in, or belonging to it, has been ever dictated, suggested, bespoke, or defined, or any other way directly or indirectly, so much as hinted or moved to him, by any person whatsoever.

“And my certainty of the truth of this makes it plain, his Lordship cannot be the author of this paper; a person of his Lordship’s dignity, veracity and judgment, would never run the risque of advancing such a thing, for which I am very well assured, his grounds must be so weak and uncertain, and which must return upon his character with so much disadvantage.

“The next thing advanced in this Vindication is, that he is convinced upon enquiry, from whence I have both my encouragement and instructions. I confess I could be very well pleased if some of this were true; and that I had either encouragement or instructions from anybody, in my resolute pursuit of truth and peace; but, to my misfortune, the fact of this is wrong, too; upon what enquiry the Vindicator may be convinced, I confess I cannot determine; I know light information will satisfy some people of what they would have true; but I must beg his pardon to say, that certainly his informer must be an imposter, and I should esteem it a piece

of justice, that I should always acknowledge, if his Lordship or his Vindicator would vouchsafe to confront that evidence, either with me or any other person, by or from whom this encouragement and these instructions have been received, and when, or in what manner given, for certainly when both were brought to the light, he would be convinced he was imposed upon, and resent it accordingly.

“If I were to run through the Black Lists of the encouragements I have met with in the world, while I have embarked myself in the raging sea of the nation’s troubles, this Vindicator would be ashamed to call them encouragements; how in pursuit of peace, I have brought myself into innumerable broils; how many exasperated by the sting of truth have vowed my destruction; and how many ways attempted it; how I stand alone in the world, abandoned by those very people that own I have done them service; how I am sold and betrayed by friends, abused and cheated by barbarous and unnatural relations, sued for other men’s debts, and stripped naked by public injustice, of what should have enabled me to pay my own; how, with a numerous family, and no helps but my own industry, I have forced my way with undiscouraged diligence, thro’ a sea of debt and misfortune, and reduced them exclusive of composition from 17000 *l.* to less than 5; how in gaols, in retreats, in all manner of extremities, I have supported myself without the assistance of friends, or relations, either to me or mine; how I still live without this Vindicator’s suggested methods, and am so far from making my fortune by this way of scribbling, that no man more desires a limitation and regulation of the press, than

myself; especially that speeches in Parliament might not be printed without order of Parliament, and poor authors betrayed to engage with men too powerful for them, in more forcible arguments than those of reason; if I should still acquaint him, that whatever he suggests, I shall never starve, tho' this way of encouragement were removed; and that were the trade with Spain open, I shall convince the world of it, by settling myself abroad, where I shall receive better treatment from both friend and enemy than I have here.

"These melancholy truths, tho' I confess myself full of them, I omit troubling the world with, only to assure this Vindicator, that the encouragements suggested to be received, for the writing against the printed paper called a 'Speech,' are mere fictions of some persons, who court some men's favour at the expense of their own honesty, and deserve their resentment, for imposing upon them.

"But then we come to instructions, and I confess myself to have received some instructions in my 'Answer,' from a very noble person, and to whom I shall always pay a due acknowledgment for the same; and, this noble person, let him be who he will, is nobody but the author of that pamphlet entitled 'My Lord H-sham's Speech.'

"The instructions there given are so plain, so easy, so frequent, and so urgent, that I confess myself pressed by invincible necessity to answer, for when the fact appeared so plain, the suggestions so naked, and the temper so singular, who could refrain himself from speaking? I am therefore accountable for nothing but the truth of what I have said; and in that I am ready to embrace the worst consequences,

having been once ruined for speaking truth, and not afraid still to defend it to the last extremities.

"The last of the three articles which the Vindication advances, I take to have some passion in them; but as they touch that only reputation the fury of men has left me, I must ask leave to say a word or two in my just defence; and tho' the case be too personal, yet the tedious Vindication of his Lordship's person is my precedent.

"Mean, mercenary and prostitute! These are titles his Lordship's Vindicator bestows upon me.

"To the first; meaner, my Lord, in my own eyes than in any man's; and willing to be as mean as man can make me, for the service of my native country, and the defence of truth, peace, and the liberty of England. But without entering into the determination of what is or is not to be understood by honour, I ask his Lordship's pardon on this occasion, only to value myself without pride or affectation in a manner I never did before. I had the honour to be trusted, esteemed, and much more than I deserved, valued by the best King England ever saw<sup>19</sup> and yet whose judgment I cannot undervalue, because he gave his Lordship his honour and his dignity, which was sometime before as mean as M. . . .<sup>20</sup> But Fate, that makes footballs of men, kicks some up stairs and some down; some are advanced without honour, others suppressed without infamy; some are raised without merit, some are crushed without crime; and no man knows by the beginning of things whether his course shall issue in a PEERAGE or a PILLORY; and time was, that

<sup>19</sup> William III.

<sup>20</sup> This doubtless stands for MINE.

no man could have determined it between his Lordship and this mean fellow except those that knew his Lordship's merit more particularly than outsiders could have directed. In the grave we shall come to a second and more exact equality; and what difference follows next will be formed on no foot of advantage from dignity or character here, so that this mean fellow has less disparity to struggle with, than the usage of him seems to allow.

“But to return to the days of King William, and the matters of honour—if I should say I had the honour to know some things from his Majesty, and to transact some things for his Majesty, that he would not have trusted his Lordship with, perhaps there may be more truth than modesty in it; and if I should say also, these honours done me helped to make me that mean thing, some people since think fit to represent me, perhaps it should be very true also.

“Thus much for meanness, the charge of which I thank Heaven is no crime. A man ought not to be afraid at any time to be mean, to be honest; pardon me therefore with some warmth to say, that neither the Vindicator, nor all his informers, can with their utmost inquiry make it appear, that I am, or ever was mercenary; and as there is a justice due from all men, of what dignity or quality soever, to one another, the wrong done me in this, can be vindicated by nothing, but proving the fact; which I am a most humble petitioner that he would be pleased to do, or else to give me leave to speak of it in such terms, as so great an injury demands.

“Here I appeal from the pamphlet, published in his Lordship's name, of which I cannot be sure,



whether it be his Lordship's or no; to that noble personage, my Lord H-sham who I am applying to, and to that honour, which by his peerage is accepted instead of an oath, even in matters of life, whether his Lordship can fairly charge me with one action in my life, that can entitle me to that scandalous appellation of a mercenary.

"No, my Lord, pardon my freedom, I contemn and abhor everything, and every man that can be taxed with that name, let his dignity be what it will; I was ever true to one principle, I never betrayed my master or my friend; I always espoused the cause of truth and liberty, was ever on one side, and that side was ever right; I have lived to be ruined for it, and I have lived to see it triumph over tyranny, party-rage, and persecution principles, and am sorry to see any man abandon it.<sup>21</sup>

"I thank God, this world cannot bid a price sufficient to bribe me; I confess, if I were of that religion, in which I should think I could merit Heaven by being a villain, I know not what I might be prevailed upon to do, in hopes of such advantage; but for this world, 'tis the principle I ever lived by, and shall espouse whilst I live, that a man ought to die rather than betray his friend, his cause, or his master; I appeal to your Lordship's honour, whether I merit the scandalous title of a mercenary, which your Vindicator has injuriously bestowed upon me.

"I own I am at a loss to know, or indeed to guess, what should move this author, while at the same time he is pleased to blame my language, to fall into this meanness himself, and attack me with a

<sup>21</sup> A sharp thrust at Lord Haversham.

missive weapon which will fly back, and do him more injury than it can do me.

"I confess, I have been too long in my own Vindication, and perhaps the reader may be tired with it, but I appeal to the occasion, to prove the necessity of it; to be called prostitute, hackney, tool, foul mouth mongrel, with a charm and protection, that writes for bread, and lives by defamation; insolent scribbler, a scandalous pen, rash, impudent and the like; all these move me not at all, and only helped me to judge, that it was impossible this Noble Lord could be the author of it, the language is so gross; but to be withal taxed with being mercenary, which I am sure this Vindicator cannot make out, I thought myself obliged to defend myself from that scandal, and I hope all that have any respect to truth will bear with it."

### *On Tyranny*<sup>22</sup>

"What strange extremes has Nature in her womb,  
From what vast causes must such monsters come?  
What strange, what wild ungoverned things are  
men,

And who can all *the Devil* of them explain?  
Their pride directs them to usurping power,  
And would not only govern, but devour;  
But if they can't tyrannic lust obtain,  
*Because they can't be Gods, they won't be men;*  
Abandon reason, let it act by halves,  
*And when they can't be tyrants, will be slaves.*

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<sup>22</sup> From "Jure Divino: A Satyr In Twelve Books. By the Author of The True-Born Englishman." 1706, Introduction, vi-vii.

Satyr, the grand inquiry now begin,  
Describe the mortal, and describe the sin;  
The horrid contradicting flight explode,  
And paint the man that *thinks himself a God*:  
To thy exacter test th' ænigma bring,  
The *kingly slave*, and the more *slavish king*.  
See how the grand coherence is maintained,  
What arts the vile clandestine homage gained;  
What seas of blood, what desolating hands,  
What murdered nations, what absurd commands;  
What mischiefs the superior crimes procure,  
And teach mankind the horrid plague to cure;  
Describe the injured crowns, describe the sin,  
*Enquiring Satyr, now the search begin."*

*A Brief Tribute to Milton*<sup>23</sup>

"Milton's *Pandemonium* is allowed to be the deepest laid thought, most capacious and extensive that ever appeared in print; and I think I cannot do too much honour to the memory of so masterly a genius, in confessing the manner of Mr. Milton's poem, in that particular, forms to me the best ideas of the matter of Original Crime, of anything put into words in our language."

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<sup>23</sup> From the same, Book VII, p. 14, note a.

## CHAPTER VI

### A SECRET AGENT IN SCOTLAND—1706-1709

FROM the autumn of 1706 to the spring of 1710 Defoe, except for one considerable interval, was only occasionally in England, the great affair of the Union demanding his presence in Scotland. His first visit lasted over a year—from October, 1706, to December, 1707,—and it was well spent so far as the interests of his employer Harley were concerned. Keeping his relations with the English government as closely concealed as was possible, and making the most of his Presbyterian connections, Defoe—or rather “Mr. Alexander Goldsmith,” to use the name he employed in writing to Harley—managed to plead most adroitly by tongue and pen a cause which was unpopular with many Scotchmen. When the two nations were finally united, he rejoiced with an almost lyric enthusiasm, and he had a right to look for the substantial reward on which he had set his heart—a position in the Scotch customs. But although he had helped parliamentary committees to settle duties on various articles and had displayed much knowledge with regard to commercial relations between the two coun-

tries, and although the ministers at home looked upon him as the most valuable of the agents they had in Edinburgh, it was deemed unwise to bestow a public post on a pilloried bankrupt. The careless Harley did not even keep the poor man supplied with funds, and he printed his pamphlets and made political journeys uncertain how he would be able to settle the debts he was incurring. At last money was sent and he was allowed to return to England. The record of his labors as given in his pamphlets, his *Review*, and his letters to Harley is invaluable both to the student of the period and to the student of the man. It is clear that he was not above deceiving the Scotch as to his status as an agent and spy, but it is equally clear that he believed in the cause he was advocating, and that few causes have been served by a more energetic and acute promoter or, as we might say, lobbyist. He deserved better treatment than he got, and it is pleasant to be able to say that modern historians seem to rely more than their predecessors did upon his account of events in which he had so important a share. Nor did he consider his task finished when the Union was an accomplished fact; he was scarcely less serviceable, during the weary months of waiting after the treaty had been signed, in reconciling to their lot the disgruntled advocates of Scotch independence.

When Defoe at last saw his wife and children again at the beginning of January, 1708, he found

that something was impending in politics that involved his own fortunes. Harley and Godolphin had been drifting apart since the elections of 1705, and the administration had taken on a more distinctively Whig character. Hence in February the former resigned his post of secretary to become in time the head of the Tory opposition. He had already transferred Defoe's services from himself to Godolphin, and he now assured his agent, who offered to resign his indefinite post, that there was no reason why such a secret service position should not be held permanently, no matter what party was in power. This was good news to the journalist, and for the next two years and a half he became, so far as we can judge, a fairly faithful and certainly an efficient servant of Godolphin and the Whigs. He supported their measures in the *Review*, and, although his tracts and letters of the period are comparatively scanty, we may infer that he was really better satisfied under his new master Godolphin than he was destined to be when the whirligig of politics brought him again into close relations to Harley. It is at least clear that no letters have yet been found showing that while he was serving Godolphin Defoe kept up any sort of subterranean connection with the treasurer's intriguing rival.

The main part of the year 1708 and a portion of 1709 were spent by Defoe in Scotland, whither Godolphin soon ordered him to repair, probably



because the rumors of the intended invasion of that country by the Pretender suggested the need of having a trained agent on the spot. The threatened descent of the French proved to be a fiasco, but Defoe's task of watching suspected Scotch Jacobites doubtless kept him busy. He may have been recalled to England for a short time in the summer of 1708, but it is not unlikely that he practically spent the year in Scotland, returning to his family only in time to enjoy Christmas with them. His movements for the next seven months are not clear, but it is on the whole probable that he remained in London, or else served as a political agent in the English counties. By September, 1709, he was back in Edinburgh, where for several months a separate issue of the *Review*, differing but slightly from the London paper, had been in progress. He remained in Scotland until late in January or early in February, 1710.

The record of his publications for this period is scarcely more interesting than the bare outline of his movements. He had been less prolific as a pamphleteer in 1707 than in the preceding year, but one would hardly be prepared for his sterility in 1708 and 1709 did not one know that a considerable part of his time was spent in traveling, and that up to and perhaps during 1709 he was occupied with writing and seeing through the press at Edinburgh his folio volume entitled *The History of the*

*Union of Great Britain.* This book, upon which he bestowed much pains and through which he became involved in an unpleasant controversy with a Scotch clergyman, is Defoe's most elaborate and valuable contribution to history, a study which occupied him from youth to old age; but it is of only slight importance to the student of literature since, save in a few passages, it is decidedly dull. After this statement the reader will scarcely demand a quotation from it, especially as a good description of its author's activity as an agent in Scotland may be had in the following letter addressed by him to his employer, Harley.

D[aniel De] F[oe] to Robert Harley.

*An Edinburgh Mob<sup>1</sup>*

"1706, October 24. Edinburgh—According to your commands in the only paper of your orders, viz. of writing constantly to you, I continue to give you the general state of things here.

"I am sorry to tell you here is a most confused scene of affairs, and the ministry have a very difficult course to steer. You allow me freedom of speaking allegories in such a case, it seems to me the Presbyterians are hard at work to restore Episcopacy, and the rabble to bring to pass the Union.

"We have had two mobs since my last, and expect a third, and of these the following is a short

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<sup>1</sup> From "Historical Manuscripts Commission. Fifteenth Report, Appendix, Part IV. The Manuscripts of his Grace the Duke of Portland, Preserved at Welbeck Abbey." Vol. IV. 1897, pp. 339-341.

account. The first was in the Assembly or Commission of Assembly, where very strange things were talked of and in a strange manner, and I confess such as has put me much out of love with ecclesiastic Parliaments. The power, *Anglicé* tyranny, of the Church was here described to the life, and *jure Divino* insisted upon, in prejudice civil authority; but this was by some tumultuous spirits who are overruled by men of more moderation, and, as an Assembly they act with more wisdom and honesty than they do in their private capacities, in which I confess they contribute too much to the general aversion which here is to the Union; at the same time they acknowledge they are unsafe and uneasy in their present establishment. I work incessantly with them, they go from me seemingly satisfied and pretend to be informed, but are the same men when they come among their parties—I hope what I say to you shall not prejudice them. In general they are the wisest weak men, the falsest honest men, and the steadiest unsettled people ever I met with. They mean well, but are blinded in their politics, and obstinate in opinion.

“But we had the last two nights a worse mob than this, and that was in the street, and certainly a Scots rabble is the worst of its kind.

“The first night they only threatened hard and followed their patron Duke Hamilton’s<sup>2</sup> chair with huzzas from the Parliament House quite through the city—they came up again hallooing in the dark, threw some stones at the guard, broke a few windows and

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<sup>2</sup> James Douglas, fourth Duke of Hamilton, an opponent of the Union, who was killed in 1712 in the famous duel with Lord Mohun.

the like, and so it ended. I was warned that night that I should take care of myself, and not appear in the street, which indeed for the last five days I have done very little, having been confined by a violent cold. However, I went up the street in a friend's coach in the evening, and some of the mob not then got together were heard to say when I went into a house, 'There was one of the English dogs, &c.' I casually stayed at the house I went to, till dark, and thinking to return to my lodging found the whole city in a most dreadful uproar and the High Street full of rabble.

"Duke Hamilton came from the House in his chair as usual, and instead of going down the city to his lodgings went up the High Street, *as was said* to visit the Duke of Athol. *This*, whether designed by the Duke as most think, or no, but if not was exactly calculated to begin the tumult, for the mob in a vast crowd attending him thither waited at the door—and as these people did not come there to be idle, the Duke could have done nothing more directly to point out their business, the late Lord Provost, Sir Patrick Johnstone, living just upon the spot.

"The mob had threatened him before, and I had been told he had such notice of it that he removed himself. Others say he was in his lodgings with eleven or twelve gentlemen besides servants resolved to defend himself, but be that as it will, the mob came up stairs to his door and fell to work with sledges to break it open, but it seems could not. His Lady in the fright with two candles in her hand that she might be known, opens the windows and cries out for God's sake to call the guard. An honest towns-

man and apothecary that saw the distress the family was in, went to the guard which is kept in the middle of the street, and found the officers very indifferent in the matter, whether as to the cause or, as is rather judged, through real fear of the rabble; but applying himself to one Capt. Richardson, a brave resolute officer, he told him he could not go from the guard without the Lord Provost's order, but if he would obtain that order, he would go up.—In short, the order was obtained and the Captain went with a party of the guard and made his way through the rabble to Sir Patrick Johnstone's staircase. The generality of them fled. Some were knocked down and the staircase cleared, and three or four taken in the very assaulting the door. Yet they fled not far, but hallooing and throwing stones and sticks at the soldiers. Several of them are very much bruised and the brave Captain I am told, keeps his bed. However, he brought down his prisoners, and the Tolbooth being at hand, hurried them in, and made his retreat to the guard. In this posture things stood about eight to nine o'clock, and the street seeming passable I sallied out and got to my lodgings.

"I had not been long there, but I heard a great noise and looking out saw a terrible multitude come up the High Street with a drum at the head of them, shouting and swearing and crying out all Scotland would stand together. 'No union.' 'No union.' 'English dogs,' and the like.

"I cannot say to you I had no apprehensions, nor was Mons. de Witt<sup>3</sup> quite out of my thoughts, and

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<sup>3</sup> Jan de Witt, a Dutch statesman, who was murdered in 1672, along with his brother Cornelius, in a popular tumult.

particularly when a part of this mob fell upon a gentleman who had discretion little enough to say something that displeased them just under my window. He defended himself bravely and called out lustily also for help to the guard, who being within hearing and ready drawn up in close order in the street, advanced, rescued the gentleman and took the person he was grappled with, prisoner.

“The city was by this time in a terrible fright, the guards were insulted and stoned as they stood, the mob put out all lights, nobody could stir in the streets, and not a light be seen in a window for fear of stones. There was a design to have shut the gate at the *Nether Bow*, as they call it, which is a gate in the middle of the great street, as Temple bar may be, and the design was to hinder the guard in the city and the guard in the *Canongate*, as they call it, from assisting one another, and cut off their communications.

“But my Lord Commissioner<sup>4</sup> prevented that by sending a detachment of his guards up the *Canongate Street*—as from Whitehall to Temple bar—who seized upon the *Nether Bow* and took post there with every soldier a link in his hand beside his arms.

“During this hurry, whether they omitted shutting the *North Port*, as they call it, which goes to *Leith*, or that it was not yet ten o’clock, I know not, but a second rabble of five hundred, some say a thousand, stout fellows came up from *Leith* and disporting themselves in the street continued the hurry in a terrible manner.

“About eleven o’clock my Lord Commissioner

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<sup>4</sup> James Douglas, second Duke of Queensberry, 1662–1711.



sent for the Lord Provost and desired him to let him send a body of the guards into the city—which they say is what never was admitted before, and some say the Lord Provost hesitated at it for a long time.

“I cannot send you the particulars of that part—but about midnight a body of the guards besides those posted at the Canongate entered the city, drums beating, marched up the High Street to the Parliament Close, and his Grace the Duke of Argyle mounted at the head of the Horse Guards to have seconded them. After the foot came my Lord Provost, the Bailiffs and Magistrates with their officers and links, and these clearing the streets the mob was dispersed. They have six I think or thereabouts in prison, and the Council is now sitting to take some further orders for preserving the peace. Two regiments of foot are sent for to quarter the city, and I hope as before, this mob will, like our Tackers,<sup>5</sup> be a mere plot to hasten what they designed to prevent.

“What further happens in this matter I shall as it occurs not fail to acquaint your honour with.”

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<sup>5</sup> See note 12, p. 74.

## CHAPTER VII

LORD OXFORD'S RIGHT-HAND MAN—1710-JULY, 1714

**A**PART from his letters to Harley, Defoe's writings during the period of his chief activity in Scotland are little calculated to arouse the interest of the modern reader, but when he returned to England in the early months of 1710, he found politics in such a state that his pen regained whatever sharpness it had lost. His tracts and the occasion that called them forth are alike buried in oblivion for the mass of mankind, but students at least remember the occasion—the famous trial of the Reverend Doctor Henry Sacheverell, who had been impeached by the Whigs of high crimes and misdemeanors for his violent political sermon against low churchmen and dissenters preached at St. Paul's in November, 1709. Defoe saw clearly the folly of making a martyr of this rabid zealot, but he stood manfully to the task of defending Godolphin and the Whigs, once the error had been committed. His good sense and his satiric powers were wasted, however, upon the mob who huzzaed for the Doctor and the Church, and by their clamors prepared the way

for the return of Harley and the Tories to power. After the inadequate sentence passed on the fanatic it was plain that the victory was with the high churchmen, and that Godolphin's ministry was doomed, especially as the country was growing weary of the war with France. Defoe therefore felt it desirable to reopen correspondence with Harley in order to make sure of retaining his place in the secret service. His former patron received him graciously and set him to work on pamphlets designed to strengthen public credit, and to allay the fears of the dissenters at the advent of the Tories to power. As Harley was by no means bent on aggrandizing the Church at the expense of the non-conformists, Defoe could all the more easily persuade himself to accept Tory bounty as unquestionably as he had accepted Whig service-money; but he could not thus transfer his allegiance without giving great offense to his former political associates. A few years before no true Tory could mention him without scorn; for years to come Whig partisans like the pamphleteer and historian John Oldmixon were to hold him up to reprobation as a hireling turncoat.

In the fall of 1710 the agent, at his own suggestion, was sent on an electioneering tour to Scotland, where he remained about three months. Quite probably he had private business in Edinburgh as well, for there is evidence that he had an interest

in newspapers published in that city. This visit to Scotland is specially important to the biographer of Defoe, because it was the occasion of his publishing a political pamphlet—*Atalantis Major*, which he endeavored to make Harley believe to be the work of another writer. If there were no other proof of his duplicity available, we might perhaps be able to persuade ourselves that it is not his homely style that confronts us in the pages of this tract; but since he was charged shortly after with writing against Harley in a Whig newspaper, the *Protestant Post Boy*, and since contemporaries for the next decade accused him of all forms of venal writing, often in cases in which modern research tends to substantiate the accusations, we must perforce believe that Defoe's experiences as a hack writer and a spy had rendered him more or less callous, and that his ingenious, casuistical mind supplied him with excuses whenever his conscience reproached him. He must live no matter which party was in power; both Whigs and Tories had treated him badly at the time of *The Shortest Way*; and now that he was perforce serving the Tories, why not earn a penny by supporting Whig policies, which were, on the whole, those he preferred? In some such way he may have argued, and remembering his misfortunes, the cruel punishments journalists endured unless they were exceptionally crafty, and the bad examples of political tergiversation set by men in high

stations, we may perhaps condone, although we cannot wholly excuse his conduct.

Throughout the major part of 1711 Defoe seems to have remained in London, constantly in attendance upon Harley or the Earl of Oxford, as we must now call the prime minister. Oxford appears to have relied upon him greatly in Scotch affairs as well as in the matter of the launching of the South Sea Company, an enterprise destined to become infamous in less than a decade. Defoe also acted as a lobbyist for various commercial interests, and, what is more to his credit, he was an earnest spokesman for the dissenters. When, however, the project of a bill against occasional conformity was again brought forward, Oxford, who was chiefly interested in bringing about peace with France, could not stand out against the rather base alliance of the high church Nottingham with the Whig peers, and so Defoe's pleas were unheeded, and the occasional bill was passed. On the other hand, Defoe did not fail his patron when it was a matter of supporting the latter's plans for securing peace. Late in 1711 and throughout 1712 he published numerous pamphlets in favor of coming to terms with France, and he adroitly altered the policy of the *Review*, which had previously supported the full demands of the allies. Probably the most important of his tracts was *Reasons why this Nation Ought to put a Speedy End to this Expensive War*, but his hand

was easily recognized in other similar productions, and the outraged Whigs held him up to reprobation as Oxford's hireling. There is evidence that their taunts hurt him sorely and that he really regarded himself as acting a patriotic part. Some of his attacks on Marlborough and the Dutch are, however, difficult to defend, and one prefers to find him issuing a series of bogus prophecies which he kept up for some years, and publishing warning tracts against the progress of Jacobite intrigues.

He was made specially aware of the activity of the Pretender's adherents and of the virulent attitude of the Whigs toward Oxford and the Tories, during his last journey to Scotland as a secret agent, which took place in the fall of 1712. His correspondence previous to this expedition shows that his health was somewhat giving way under the strain of his labors, but he was not willing to relieve himself by discontinuing, as he had planned to do, the discredited *Review* at the end of the eighth volume. He reduced it in matter and kept it going, with slight intermissions, for almost a year, and after a brief interval, he resumed his pamphleteering as though his strength were unimpaired. He displayed also some of the rashness as well as the energy of youth, for unmindful of his experience with *The Shortest Way*, he began to use his favorite but dangerous weapon of irony against his Jacobite foes. The title of one of his tracts, *Rea-*



*sons against the Succession of the House of Hanover* (1713), gave another set of his enemies, the Whigs, the chance they had long been waiting for. No reader of the pamphlet could fail, unless blinded by passion, to perceive that its author was writing ironically, that he was a firm supporter of the succession established by law. But on its face the title chosen was treasonable, and certain Whigs brought an action against him. Indirectly they aimed to involve Lord Oxford also, for if he interfered to save his agent, Defoe, plain evidence would be afforded of those relations between the minister and the journalist which the latter had always denied. The plan was astute, but the plans Defoe laid to secure Oxford's assistance without exposing the prime minister, were still more adroit.

They have been made clear through the publication of Defoe's letters of the period, and with the aid of the ninth volume of the *Review* we can form an interesting and amusing picture of the whole proceeding—of the way his printers were trapped into testifying to his handwriting; of the service of the warrant on Defoe at Newington by the chief justice's tipstaff; of the straggling procession back to London, the arrested journalist riding ahead; of the manner in which the Whig prosecutors were foiled when Mr. William Borrett, solicitor to the treasury, declared himself satisfied with the bail offered. The rash pamphleteer would doubtless have come

off scot free, had he not committed the error of reflecting in the *Review* upon Chief Justice Parker, whose conduct in the case had apparently been partisan and scarcely intelligent. This contempt of court led to a brief confinement in the Queen's Bench Prison in May, 1713.

Matters were quickly accommodated, however, since Bolingbroke and his chief assistant, Arthur Moore, needed in the interests of the proposed treaty of trade with France, the services of the most experienced of English journalists, and of one of the best informed of living economists. So Defoe was released after he had made an apology to the court, and he undertook the conduct of a new trade journal, *Mercator*, which he edited from May 26, 1713, to July 20, 1714. The treaty supported by him in this paper and in numerous pamphlets was too liberal for the times, and failed under the assaults of the Whigs and their merchant abettors; but Defoe in his knowledge of commerce and in his powers of reasoning got the better of his adversaries, although his contemporaries did not realize the fact. Unfortunately, he was very disingenuous in his endeavors to conceal his connection with *Mercator*, which is plainly confessed in his correspondence with Oxford, and five years later he was editing another trade journal, the *Manufacturer*, in which he opposed his former liberal principles. We may well doubt whether the

queen who late in 1713, through the influence of Oxford, gave Defoe a pardon for all past offenses in order that he might frustrate further efforts of his Whig enemies, had in her dominions an abler, a better informed, or a more versatile and energetic subject than Daniel Defoe; but in the light of all the evidence we cannot now agree with his older biographers that he was in addition a man and a patriot of the most exemplary character. He was doubtless, however, more sinned against than sinning, and even to-day injustice is done his memory when we totally neglect his interesting and valuable contributions at this time to political and economic literature—such tracts, for example, as his brilliantly satirical *Secret History of the October Club* (1711), and *A General History of Trade* (1713).

From the close of 1713 to August 1, 1714, the date of Queen Anne's death, Defoe's relations with Lord Oxford seem to have been closer than they were when he began to edit *Mercator* in the interest of Bolingbroke. He wrote several tracts, such as *A Letter to the Dissenters*, designed to strengthen Oxford's hands; he gave him good but unheeded advice against the new measure which threatened the non-conformists, the illegal "Schism Act" (1714), and he steadily sought to keep the prime minister true to the cause of the House of Hanover. In the differences with Bolingbroke, which finally wrecked Oxford just before the death of the queen

wrecked all the Tory politicians, the journalist agent appears to have been loyal to Oxford, which is not surprising in view of their long intimacy and of Bolingbroke's loose reputation. To offset this loyalty we have some rather scurvy services rendered the Tory administration against Sir Richard Steele, when that kindly writer was in trouble over his famous pamphlet, *The Crisis*. Perhaps Defoe's worst trait was the delight he seems to have taken in urging the government to punish other journalists. Yet there is also evidence that he was essentially a kind-hearted man, and doubtless, if he had not become an outcast, we should have more proof than we actually have that he was affable and companionable. As it is, we must picture him to ourselves as a shunned bankrupt and turncoat, living in chambers in London or with his wife and children in a large house in Newington, seeing little or nothing of the gay society of the epoch, not even acquainted with the fellow men of letters who with himself give the age its chief luster, but, none the less, in no sense a recluse, rather the keenest observer of his day, the most intelligent, alert, and well paid of the prime minister's secret agents and the most accomplished journalist England had produced—perhaps the most remarkable the world has ever seen.

To represent this journalist, particularly at this

prolific period, by adequate selections would be possible only in a large volume. Here we must content ourselves with some specimens of his pseudo-prophecies, some sensible remarks on the need of English studies in a theological education, taken from a rare book, *The Present State of the Parties in Great Britain*, a letter to Lord Oxford, which is important for the proof it affords that the prime minister must have managed most adroitly his unscrupulous but sensitive agent, and finally a selection from the ironical tract which put this sometimes impulsive and miscalculating politician once more within the clutches of the law.

### *Defoe Poses as a Prophet<sup>1</sup>*

#### *The Preface*

"In the year 1711, I, Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., the Prophet, who formerly prophesied and foretold you so many remarkable things, viz. in the year 1707; all which, as is well known, are most exactly come to pass; and having by my knowledge and acquaintance for above one hundred years with the stars, and with utmost diligence applied myself to know

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<sup>1</sup>From "The British Visions: or, Isaac Bickerstaff Senr; Being Twelve Prophecies for the Year 1711. Enter'd in the Hall-Book of the Company of Stationers. Printed first in the North, and now Reprinted at London; And Sold by John Baker at the Black Boy in Pater-Noster-Row. 1711. (Price 2d.)"

by the aspects of heavenly bodies and other methods, also what shall happen on the earth: I say, that I the aforesaid Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., am moved, as well by astrological vision, as the especial genius of those powers which influence human bodies, to make known to the world what shall come to pass.

“By this prophetic skill, I once, amongst other well known events, predicted and foretold you, that John Partridge<sup>2</sup> the almanac-maker should die, and be buried on or before such a day of the month, which, as you all know came to pass to a moment.

“Having therefore obtained such an undoubted skill and judgment in these most useful and advantageous things, I can no longer refrain from letting my countrymen of this nation know the great revolutions of Kingdoms and States, and the dreadful things that shall suddenly come to pass in the earth. I am also the more earnestly moved to this great and wonderful prophetic skill, that such great and terrible things, such surprising events, and such desolations are preparing in the world, and shall come to pass this ensuing year, as were never seen by the eyes of any one living or would enter into the conceptions of any man to foretell, had they not by an extraordinary acquainted skill in knowing and determining such things, been foreseen by me, Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., Sen.

“And thus, honest reader, being nothing doubting of thy diligent attention to what I shall prophesy, I bid thee farewell.”

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<sup>2</sup> As Mr. Seccombe tells us in the Dictionary of National Biography, the famous Partridge sometimes used this spelling. That it is Defoe who is here appropriating some of the glory of Swift is clearly proved by a letter written the former by a Newcastle printer.



*Prophecy VIII<sup>3</sup>*

“Among the several armies that range Europe, none escape a most bloody action but those in Flanders. The Swedes, the Poles, the Muscovites, the Turks, the Germans make war, not after the new but the old fashion, and fight as it were by mutual consent wherever they meet; so that every post now brings news of battles and slaughter. About August the Turks and Muscovites fight a terrible battle; Victory mocks both sides and both sides mock the world with pretences to it; yet the Turks appear sooner in the field again, and seem to feel the loss least, tho’ they have most men in the roll of slaughter.

“If the real plague spreads near us, it is the same month; God preserve our populous towns from such a stroke; the desolation of Dantzick, where they tell us a fifth part of the people perished, yet will be a flea-bite to what we must suffer; but the Prophet tells you, ‘If you escape this year, you should not flatter yourselves about the next.’

“Germany may expect a bloody campaign, if the Swedes are beaten in Poland; for if that Monarch<sup>4</sup> finds his work hard on that side, he increases his strength for diversion on another. Denmark seems this year to borrow the old character of the Muscovites, neither fit for war nor peace, for they make nothing of their attempts anywhere, and are beaten everywhere.

“A fruitless war upon the Alps, where men fight with mountains and rocks, are frightened with snow

<sup>3</sup> From the same, pp. 12, 13.

<sup>4</sup> Charles XII of Sweden.

and torrents of water, struggle hard with nature and art, and go home with little or nothing."

*The Conclusion*<sup>5</sup>

"Thus have I, Bickerstaff the Aged, given you a view of this fatal year that is yet to come; the sum of the matter lies in a few heads.

"France gains at first by exerting herself with uncommon vigor, but loses again both her glory and her advantages before the end of the campaign. Britain is at vast expense, rather gains than loses, but not suitable to her occasion, any more than to her expectation. The Muscovite suffers vast losses, yet gains ground. The Swede gets victory with little profit. The Turk makes great spoil with very little gain. The Poles have some advantages, by which they are ruined. The Empire is delivered from peace. The Dane by want of success delivered from the war.<sup>6</sup>

"On every side Europe is afflicted, plagued, harassed and ravaged by the war, and yet sees no end of her sorrows. What shall befall her in the year to come shall also be foretold in its season by me.

"ISAAC BICKERSTAFF."

*The Need of English Studies in a Theological Education*<sup>7</sup>

"Many of the tutors in our academies, [i. e. those in which young dissenters were trained for the min-

<sup>5</sup> From the same, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> In the original each sentence forms a paragraph.

<sup>7</sup> From "The Present State of the Parties in Great Britain:

istry,] *I do not say all, because I know some of another opinion*, being careful to keep the knowledge of the tongues, or particularly fond of philology, or for what other reasons, *perhaps 'tis best not to enquire*, tie down their pupils so exactly, and limit them so strictly to perform every exercise, and to have all their readings in Latin or in Greek, that, at the end of the severest term of study, nay, were they to perform a quarantine of years in the schools, they come out unacquainted with English, tho' that is the tongue in which all their gifts are to shine. This is an abuse so gross, so undeniable in fact, and so mischievous in consequence, that it is no way to be accounted for.

“ 'Tis evident, the great imperfection of our academies is want of conversation; this the public universities enjoy; ours cannot. If a man pores upon his book, and despises the advantage of conversation, he always comes out a pedant, a mere scholar, rough and unfit for anything out of the walls of his college. Conversation polishes the gentlemen in discourse, acquaints 'em with men, and with words; lets them into the polite part of language; gives them style, accent, delicacy, and taste in expression; and when they come to appear in English, they preach as they discourse, easy, free, plain, unaffected, and untainted with force, stiffness, formality, affected hard words, and all the ridiculous parts of a learned pedant, which is, being inter-

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Particularly an Enquiry into the State of the Dissenters in England, and the Presbyterians in Scotland; their Religious and Politick Interest consider'd, as it respects their Circumstances before and since the late Acts against Occasional Conformity in England; and for Tolleration of Common Prayer in Scotland.” 1712, pp. 316-318.

puted, a *school fop*; while, on the other hand, from our schools we have abundance of instances of men that come away masters of Science, critics in the Greek and Hebrew, perfect in languages; and perfectly ignorant (if that term may be allowed) of their mother tongue, especially as to the beauties of style, cadence, and politeness of language.

“The usefulness and excellency of the languages is no way run down in this observation; but preaching the Gospel, which is the end of our study, is done in English, and it seems absurd to the last degree, that all the time should be spent in the languages which it is to be *fetched from*, and none in the language it is to be *delivered in*. A man would blush to read the very orthography of some among us, who are masters of all the Oriental<sup>8</sup> Languages, who can place their accents right in the Greek, can criticize on the Latin, can point the Hebrew, and cannot spell their English.

“And why is it that some of the greatest scholars we have had among us, that have the whole mystery of the Gospel in their hearts, and a body of divinity in their heads, that have a vast stock of learning, a whole age’s reading, and even a burthen of letters in them, yet preach away all their hearers, for want of the English tongue, while a jingling, noisy boy, that has a good stock in his face, and a dysentery of the tongue, tho’ he has little or nothing in his head, shall run away with the whole town? It is true, the corruption of our taste in hearing is to be accounted for in this; of which afterward; but one error is in the first concoction. It is true, the head is the main thing that a tutor is to see fur-

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<sup>8</sup> So in the original.

nished; but the tongue must be tuned, or he'll make no music with the voice; so the hand is to be taught to touch the viol; but if the strings are not in tune, the music will be very harsh.

"Acceptable words, a good diction, a grave, yet polite, and easy style in the English, is a most taking and valuable thing in a minister, and without which his learning cannot exert itself. This we find generally neglected, and left wholly to nature; and this is the mistake spoken of.

"From this neglect comes foppish gaiety, rambling distraction, stiff formality, and surfeiting affectation in style, all of them fatal in their degree, unpolite, without cadence, without energy, or without that easy, free plainness which is the glory and excellency of the English tongue."

*A Letter From Defoe to the Earl of Oxford on the Relations Subsisting Between Them*<sup>9</sup>

"1712, August 18.—The notice your Lordship was pleased to take of my melancholy case stated in the preface to the *Review*<sup>10</sup>, and the goodness wherewith you were pleased to express it to me make deep impressions on a mind fixed to you by so many obligations.

"At the same time that I profess not to plead it as merit I acknowledge it is to my honour that the indignity and reproach cast on me by these unhappy people is levelled at your Lordship. Providence

<sup>9</sup> From "Historical Manuscripts Commission. Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace, the Duke of Portland, Preserved at Welbeck Abbey." Vol. V. 1899, pp. 212-214.

<sup>10</sup> The preface to the eighth volume is meant. It is a valuable and moving bit of autobiography, which may be read in Aitken's *Later Stuart Tracts*.

having placed you out of their reach (may it ever be so!) they fall upon him they can hurt, to show their rage at you, whom they cannot; as the dog bites the stone flung at him, not daring or not able to touch the hand that throws it.

“I endeavour to practice the great work of resignation under the injurious treatment I receive, submitting it to his disposal, who in a like occasion (though of higher moment) bade Shimei curse, but left him not unrewarded. It is my satisfaction that as their rage is a testimony to the weight and the conviction of what I say, so you are pleased to approve my service, and thereby add a weight to it, which I have not modesty little enough to think it deserves. God and your Lordship are witnesses for me against this generation, in that your goodness to me was founded on no principles of bribery and corruption, but a generous compassion to a man oppressed by power without a crime, and abandoned even then by those he sacrificed himself to serve. The same witnesses are a testimony for me that my services (however small) are founded rather, and indeed entirely, on a deep sense of duty and gratitude for that early goodness, than on any view that I can merit what may be to come. You have always acted with me on such foundations of mere abstracted bounty and goodness that it has not so much as suggested the least expectation on your part, that I should act this way or that, leaving me at full liberty to pursue my own reason and principles, and above all enabling me to declare my innocence in the black charge of bribery.

“Whatever you have done for me, you never yet so much as intimated (though ever so remotely)



that you expected from me the least bias in what I should write, or that her Majesty's bounty to me was intended to guide my opinion. Your Lordship has too much honour in your principle to look that way, or to think me worth your notice, if I could have been so moved; and how would these people blush, should I own to them, that her Majesty's bounty, which I now enjoy, was procured for me by your intercession, even under the administration of your worst enemies.

"This fills me with peace under all their clamour that I serve a master who scorns the service of a mercenary conscience, and who at the same time that he does me good, leaves me full liberty to obey the dictates of my own principles.

"This, my Lord, gives me room to declare, as I do in print every day, that I am neither employed, dictated to, or rewarded for, or in, what I write by any person under heaven; and I make this acknowledgment with thankfulness to your Lordship, and as a testimony to your great goodness to me, that you never laid the least injunction on me of one kind or other, to write or not to write this or that, in any case whatsoever. It is, however, my great satisfaction, that what first is founded on principle and reason, agreeable to conscience, equity, and the good of my country, aye, and to these unhappy people's interest too, if they understood their interest, is at the same time agreeable to your Lordship, and that while I am rendering you service I am discharging the debt of justice to truth and liberty, the great principle on which I hope I shall never cease to act; and which while I pursue I am always sure to please and oblige you.

"I most humbly ask your pardon for this excursion, a heart oppressed as mine by public reproach (without guilt) must needs be full, and as I am driven by the torrent upon a more entire dependence on your Lordship, so have I no human appeal but to yourself. However, I cease to enlarge on this unpleasant subject, having yet a further humble application to make, for which I have still more reason to ask pardon.

"I hinted to you my desire to take a journey North; I will not dissemble so far with you as not to own, that a little business part of the way, and withal the direction of physicians for my going to the Bath in Derbyshire, join in to make me desirous of going. But I am persuaded also, I may be more useful to your Lordship in a small circuit on that side at this time, as well for counteracting the measures taken to distract the country, as for calming and quieting the minds of the poor prepossessed people than ever I was yet; and as the juncture for such a business seems proper, and leisure at home agrees, I am your humble petitioner for leave.

"But I am yet straitened in the rest of my petition. Your goodness to me is too great to allow me the least solicitation for further favours than I enjoy, nor am I representing the expenses of my journey, for which your Lordship had always the goodness to make me large allowance. But I am forced by importuning circumstances to remind you that of that allowance or appointment, which by your intercession and her Majesty's goodness I enjoy, there are two quarters behind which insensibly (except to me) elapsed, during the melancholy

interval when your Lordship was hurt<sup>11</sup> and things unsettled. I say no more! I am a very mean advocate in my own case, and had rather my circumstances should silently move your tenderness and compassion, than that by importunity I should be forward and craving; God has cast me on your goodness so entirely that He seems to direct me thereby to a more close application than ever to your interest and service; for sure, whenever I shall be deprived of your favour or assistance, if this party can make me miserable, they will not fail to do it to the utmost."

Endorsed by Lord Oxford:—"Mr. Guilot,<sup>12</sup> August 19, (sic), 1712."

*Irony That Missed Its Mark*<sup>13</sup>

"But yet I have other reasons than these, and more cogent ones; learned men say, some diseases in nature are cured by antipathies, and some by sympathies; that the enemies of nature are the best preservatives of nature; that bodies are brought down by the skill of the physician that they may the better be brought up, made sick to be made well, and carried to the brink of the grave in order to be kept from the grave; for these reasons, and in order to these things, poisons are administered for physic; or amputations in surgery. The flesh is

<sup>11</sup> The reference to the wounding of Harley by Guiscard in 1711.

<sup>12</sup> One of the names Defoe assumed in order to keep secret his relations with Lord Oxford.

<sup>13</sup> From "Reasons against the Succession of the House of Hanover, with an Enquiry How far the Abdication of King James, supposing it to be Legal, ought to affect the Person of the Pretender." 1713, pp. 18-21.

cut that it may heal; an arm laid open that it may close with safety; and these methods of cure are said to be the most certain as well as most necessary in those particular cases, from whence it is become a proverbial saying in physic, 'Desperate diseases must have desperate remedies.' Now it is very proper to enquire in this case whether the nation is not in such a state of health at this time, that the coming of the Pretender may not be of absolute necessity by way of cure of such national distempers which now afflict us, and that an effectual cure can be wrought no other way. If upon due enquiry it should appear that we are not fit to receive such a prince as the Successor of the House of Hanover is, that we should maltreat and abuse him, if he were here, and that there is no way for us to learn the true value of a Protestant Successor, so well as by tasting a little what a Popish Pretender is, and feeling something of the great advantages that may accrue to us by the superiority of a Jacobite party; if the disease of stupidity has so far seized us that we are to be cured only by poisons and fermentations; if the wound is mortified, and nothing but deep incisions, amputations, and desperate remedies, must be used; if it should be necessary thus to teach us the worth of things by the want of them; and there is no other way to bring the nation to its senses, why, what can then be said against the Pretender? Even let him come that we may see what slavery means, and may enquire how the chains of French gallies hang about us, and how easy wooden shoes are to walk in; for no experience teaches so well as that we buy dearest, and pay for with the most smart.

"I think this may pass for a very good reason against the Protestant Succession. Nothing is surer than that the management of King Charles II and his late brother, were the best ways the nation could ever have taken to bring to pass the Happy Revolution; yet these afflictions to the Island were not joyous, but grievous, for the time they remained, and the poor kingdoms suffered great convulsions; but what weighs that, if these convulsions are found to be necessary to a cure? If the physicians prescribe a vomit for the cure of any particular distemper, will the patient complain of being made sick? No, no; when you begin to be sick, then we say, 'Oh! that is right,' and then the vomit begins to work; and how shall the Island of Britain spue out all the dregs and filth the public digesture has contracted, if it be not made sick with some French physic? If you give good nourishing food upon a foul stomach, you cause that wholesome food to turn into filth, and instead of nourishing the man it nourishes diseases in the man, till those diseases prove his destruction, and bring him to the grave. In like manner, if you will bring the Protestant Successor into the government before that government have taken some physic to cleanse it from the ill digesture it may have been under, how do we know but the diseases which are already begun in the constitution may not be nourished, and kept up, till they may hereafter break out in the days of our posterity, and prove mortal to the nation. Wherefore should we desire the Protestant Successor to come in upon a foot of high-flying menage,<sup>14</sup> and be beholding for their establishment to

<sup>14</sup> Defoe liked to air his French. Perhaps the word means

those who are the enemies of the constitution? Would not this be to have in time to come the Successors of that House be the same thing as the ages past have already been made sick of, and made to spue out of the government? Are not any of these considerations enough to make any of us averse to the Protestant Succession? No, no; let us take a French vomit first, and make us sick, that we may be well, and may afterwards more effectually have our health established."<sup>15</sup>

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here, if it be not synonymous with "establishment," little more than "management," and it may be a mere variant of the noun "manage."

<sup>15</sup> It seems needless to allow Defoe to continue his coarse but effective argument. It appears to be necessary, on the contrary, to give this unpleasant selection in order to show the gross partisanship of a period in which such a pamphlet as *Reasons against the Succession of the House of Hanover* could have been deemed treasonable in a Protestant nation. When such obvious irony missed its mark, the devious efforts of a professional journalist to escape detection and punishment were surely natural and not greatly reprehensible.



## CHAPTER VIII

DEFOE EXTRICATES HIMSELF FROM THE TOILS—AUGUST, 1714-1715

IT USED to be believed that after the death of Queen Anne, Defoe retired from politics, and, with the exception of a pamphlet or two, devoted himself to the production of the books which give him his standing in literature. The discovery, however, about fifty years ago, of letters written in 1718 by Defoe to Mr. Charles Delafaye, one of the under secretaries of state, in which the journalist mentioned openly his employment by the government as a secret agent, or not to mince words, as a spy upon Jacobite editors and writers, necessitated the abandonment of this view. It also led William Lee to undertake researches, which resulted in important additions to our knowledge of Defoe's later career, in a considerable enlargement of the list of his pamphlets, and in the publication of a number of the contributions made by him to certain periodicals between the years 1716-1726. Lee's work was supplemented by that of the great Manchester bibliographer, James Crossley, and of other

students, and, following them, the present writer has been able largely to augment the list of Defoe's publications and to present a fuller and more accurate description of the closing years of his life. From the fall of 1714, however, we are deprived of the valuable assistance of the "Harley Papers," and, unless unknown batches of his correspondence come to light, we must content ourselves with very imperfect knowledge of what is in many respects the most interesting portion of his remarkable career.

Not the least puzzling section of this later career is the autumn of 1714, with which the present chapter begins. It is clear that for a short time after the queen's death Defoe kept himself in retirement, knowing that he was obnoxious to the Hanoverians on account of his relations with Lord Oxford, and fearing that his own fortunes would decline along with those of the latter. Nevertheless his first impulse was to be faithful to his patron, and he set to work preparing a defense of the fallen statesman's administration, which was published, under the title of *The Secret History of the White Staff*, in three parts, between September, 1714, and February, 1715. His intentions were not, however, entirely disinterested, for the new king not having yet landed, it was not certain that Oxford would lose all influence, and Defoe very much needed help in a new legal embarrassment. He had for some

time been engaged in a discreditable intrigue with William Hurt, printer of the violent Whig newspaper, the *Flying Post*, to get that journal more or less out of the control of its editor, George Ridpath, who had been for several years exceedingly bitter against the editor of the *Review*. The intrigue failed, and Hurt founded a rival *Flying Post*, to which Defoe contributed. One of its numbers for August contained a letter sharply reflecting upon the loyalty of the Earl of Anglesey, who thereupon invoked the aid of the law. Some connection was established between Defoe and the letter—he claimed that he merely “softened” it—and he was arrested on the charge of criminal libel. How he fared in the matter will be told later; here we must follow to their close his relations with Lord Oxford.

It is clear from Defoe’s correspondence of August and September, 1714, that he believed himself to be on good terms with his former employer, and that he hoped that *The Secret History of the White Staff* would serve the latter by giving a creditable account of his administration. It is equally clear, however, that, although Defoe’s pamphlets were an able and probably on the whole an honest contribution to contemporary political history, he made the tactical mistakes of bearing too hard on Bolingbroke and of emphasizing, even though attempting to exculpate, Oxford’s intrigues with the Scottish Ja-

cobites. The two earlier parts were at once attacked both by Tory writers, who supported Bolingbroke and other members of the late administration rather than Oxford, and by Whigs, who wished to avenge themselves upon the chief Tory leaders for the inglorious peace with France and for the hazards the Hanoverian cause had run since 1710. Knowing that the public regarded him as the inspirer of the tracts, and perceiving that they had injured rather than helped his case, Oxford began to repudiate them in his correspondence, and a few months later, while he was a prisoner in the Tower, he felt it necessary to issue an advertisement denying that he had had anything to do with *The Secret History of the White Staff*, or with another tract which we now know as Defoe's. What Defoe thought of this repudiation of his efforts we cannot tell with absolute certainty, but we have good reason to infer that he was greatly outraged.

Apparently his health broke down for a while in the autumn, and, perceiving that the heads of all connected with the late ministry were in danger, realizing moreover that he himself was distrusted on all sides and lay under an indictment for criminal libel, he determined to withdraw as far as possible from public attention, and gave it out—particularly in a note appended to his *Appeal to Honour and Justice*—that he was lying at death's door. It is certain, however, that for many weeks before the publica-

tion of the *Appeal*, which purported to give a true account of his own career and was instead a very plausible attempt to mollify and mislead his enemies, he was exceedingly busy with his pen, endeavoring by various pamphlets to discredit the *White Staff* tracts and the replies that had been made to them. He tried to make people believe that he himself had written very little since the queen's death, and that Lord Oxford had authorized no exculpations. At the same time, if we may trust contemporary accusations and internal evidence, he began to write tracts against the late ministry and in favor of the Whigs. It is at least clear that within the space of twelve months he had written a score or more of thoroughly Whiggish tracts full of loyalty to the new king George I and of denunciations of the Tories and the Jacobites. In some of these, and in later publications, passages occur which seem to show that Defoe had always had some contempt for Oxford, and that he deeply resented the latter's repudiation of the *White Staff* series; but there is also evidence that he did not really wish to have his former patron brought to the block as a traitor, and that on several occasions before the ex-minister was finally released from the Tower his quondam agent published tracts designed to lessen the animosity with which the discredited statesman was regarded. It is a very tangled matter which cannot be here discussed in detail.

Throughout it all Defoe's motives and his conduct seem to have been mixed, but one gets the abiding impression that, despite his duplicity and instability, he was essentially a stanch Protestant, a patriotic Englishman and a kind-hearted man.

If Defoe was really ill in the autumn of 1714, he must have recovered quickly and completely, for the year 1715 is one of the most crowded in his whole bibliography. In it he published two thick volumes, a monthly miscellany making up another volume, and more than thirty tracts, to say nothing of a considerable number of pamphlets that may be assigned to him with some plausibility. The volumes were an account of the career of Charles XII of Sweden and the first of Defoe's manuals of conduct, his popular *Family Instructor*, in which, as well as in the periodical miscellany *News from the Dead*, we discover mild attempts at fiction pointing forward to *Robinson Crusoe*. Of the pamphlets it must suffice to say that they left few political topics untouched, that they steadily grew more Whiggish in character, and that in some cases they attacked special men with brilliant effectiveness. The Whig pamphleteer, Thomas Burnet, who had clamored for the punishment of Lord Oxford, the dissenting clergyman, Thomas Bradbury, and the high church Sacheverell, the Duke of Ormond, and the Earl of Mar, all felt his lash. He was particularly successful when he posed as a



pious Quaker and couched his sarcasm and invective in biblical phraseology.

During a considerable part of this prolific year Defoe had hanging over his head the indictment for criminal libel against the Earl of Anglesey. Perhaps he kept himself preternaturally busy in order to drown as well as he could his apprehensions of a third imprisonment; perhaps he had already determined to plead for mercy on the score of a mass of recent writing in favor of the new Hanoverian régime. All that we know definitely is that he was convicted in July, that sentence was postponed, that in November it was reported that he had forfeited his recognizance by not appearing to receive sentence, and that then all proceedings against him were dropped through the good offices of Chief Justice Parker, whom two years before he had greatly offended. It seems likely, from a passage in his *Vision of the Angelic World*, appended to the third part of *Robinson Crusoe*, that Defoe conceived the idea of writing to the chief justice and pleading with him for mercy. It is certain from one of Defoe's letters to Delafaye that Parker recommended him to Lord Townshend, then secretary of state, as a journalist who might be useful to the government. Probably Defoe's letter was pathetic; possibly Parker may have felt that the charges against the Earl of Anglesey had some basis in fact; in all likelihood Defoe pointed to re-

cent services to the Whigs as a proof that he was repentant and capable of being useful.

However this may be, a few damaging facts are unfortunately very clear.<sup>1</sup> A bargain was soon struck between the journalist and the secretary, the results of which were that the former continued to pass for a Tory with the public, that he became a partner in a disaffected news-letter and rendered it innocuous, that he founded and edited a mildly Tory repository of political news—the monthly *Mercurius Politicus*—that he received employment in the Jacobite weekly published by Nathaniel Mist, suppressing or toning down questionable political articles, and finally that he took pains to keep the government posted on what was going on among the anti-Hanoverians. It is not to be supposed, of course, that all of the details of this bargain were settled at first; it is merely clear that in all these ways Defoe served Lord Townshend and the latter's successors, Lords Sunderland and Stanhope, during the years 1716-1720. That Defoe was glad to purchase immunity for the past, and that he flattered himself that he was doing a patriotic service to his country we may readily believe; that he loathed his own occupation his own correspondence testifies;<sup>1</sup> but that he should be excused only blinded partisans will hold. It should be remembered, however, that it takes two to make a bargain and that it is unjust to

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<sup>1</sup> See the letter given at p. 161.

condemn a spy without censuring his employers. The men who utilized the baseness of Defoe were highly respected for their titles, their affluence, their power; the man they scornfully employed was under sentence for a criminal offense, he was a bankrupt outcast, and he was a writer for hire who had a large and expensive family to support. Doubtless neither he nor his noble employers, nor the rival journalists who for the next few years lost no opportunity of reviling him, had the slightest notion that within a short period he would win immortal fame as the author of what is probably the most widely known of all works of prose fiction. Before we ourselves come to *Robinson Crusoe*, however, we must describe the work of these busy years, and we must through selections take a view of Defoe as a political apologist and consummate casuist. In other words, we must give some quotations from the *White Staff* tracts and from the pathetic *Appeal to Honour and Justice*.

### *A Sketch of Political Events<sup>2</sup>*

"The reasons and beginnings of the late revolution at court, under the ministry of the late Earl of Godolphin are too many, and the history too long to be entered upon in this tract; it is evident

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<sup>2</sup> From the first part of "The Secret History of the White-Staff, Being An Account of Affairs under the Conduct of some late Ministers, and of what might probably have happened if Her Majesty had not Died." 1714, pp. 6-15.

some steps in the management of affairs, at that time, gave another party room to break in upon them, and at once both to supplant their power and their persons.

“And as if a fate had attended that ministry, and that the revolutions of the administration were inevitable, it is observable they committed more mistakes in their attempts even to defend themselves, and ward off the blow, than at any time before; these were such as the prosecution of Dr. Sacheverell for a sermon preached at St. Paul’s Church, which by carrying their resentment up to an impeachment in Parliament, they made a popular cause, and which received so much weight from the warmth of the prosecution, and vigour of the defence that it removed the dispute from the person to the parties, embarked the Church and its interests in the quarrel, and brought the ministry, without any such design, to a necessity of acting as it were against the Church interest itself which they all were members of.

“We can have no room to doubt, but they were led into this snare by the accident of that worthless man’s sermon, who was not capable himself to do it with any such design, or considerable enough to be employed by others that were; it being impossible for the wisest head to foresee the event, or to imagine that the ministry would either want forecast so much as to engage in such a little affair, or want strength to go through with it when they had engaged.

“When this sermon was first preached, tho’ it gave offence, yet no man ever expected the ministry would trouble themselves about it; when they began

to speak of it in the House of Commons, nothing could be expected more than calling the man before them, keeping him a little in custody, bringing him to the bar, giving him a reprimand, censuring his sermon to be burnt by the hangman, &c. But the enemies of the ministry seeing further than others, were the first that laid the bait to bring it up to an impeachment, by which means they gained the point they had long driven at, viz. to embroil the ministry with the Church, at which gap they broke in upon the ministry, supplanted them with the Queen, whose zeal for the Church could not permit her Majesty to gratify the resentment of her ministers upon a clergyman, and from one thing to another they went on till they gained their end, and got a *supersedeas* to the White Staff, as the first step to a general change of the administration, and at this epocha, our Secret History takes its beginning.

“There were concurring mistakes at this time committed among themselves, such as the breach with a Secretary of State<sup>3</sup> a little before, who they dismissed from his employment, with all the marks of resentment imaginable, even to indecencies, and such treatment which signified an assurance of their power and the utmost disregard to anything he might be able to do against them to do himself justice, and yet, at the same time, they knew that they were not able to supplant him in the favour of the Queen, or prevent her Majesty giving him distinguishing marks of that favour even before their faces, and also taking her measures from his councils, in contradiction to the steps which they had often taken, and which sometimes gave them the

<sup>3</sup> Robert Harley, afterward Earl of Oxford.

mortification of silently squaring their measures by his schemes, that they might seem to act from themselves what they should probaby be obliged to do, after they had in vain opposed it.

“This secret fire they neglected at first, and im-politically suffered so long to encrease, till it broke out into a flame, which they could never quench; and continuing obstinately to oppose the restoring that one minister, on presumption that the Queen would not venture to act without them; by this measure they lost the Queen herself, and by consequence fell from the administration, and were supplanted by that hand which they had not thought worth their while to apprehend any danger from.

“The blow once given, and the ministry displaced, a new scene opened of which the like has not been known in the case of displacing a ministry, and to this is owing the terrible breaches which have since happened among us. It will be very much to the purpose, and a necessary consequence of the present design, as laid down in the title, to pursue, with brevity, the conduct of the several parties subsequent to this remove.

“The White Staff being laid down, was, for the present, determined into five White Staves, of whom the person for whom fate had designed it, was not made the chief at first, but had the affair of the Exchequer so put into his hands, that in effect, he might transact things with more inspection.

“This is noted to signify what has not been noticed so much as it ought to have been, because, that, affairs taking a new turn soon after, the Prime Minister had not opportunity fully to discover, much less put in practice, the first measures he had taken



for the administration, which apparently were to have made no manner of alteration in public affairs, or of persons either, further than necessity required; that is to say, not to have altered the measures abroad, other than to rectify some things which wanted redress, and bring our allies to a more punctual performance of the stipulations and agreements which they were under, that the burthen of the war might have been more equally borne; a thing which, however it was thought to be the invention of the new managers, it is certain the old ministry were sensible of, complained openly against, but did not think fit to carry any farther, for reasons which I will not think fit to determine.

“Nor were the new ministry resolved only to go on upon the same measures of the administration, but even with the same persons, a few excepted, had not the vigorous opposition made against them, by the interest of those who were actually displaced, made it absolutely necessary to displace others; and the indiscretion of many yet reserved in place, increased the necessity by degrees to the extreme which we have since seen it brought to.

“It is true, that the dissolving the Parliament became the substance of the question, which the displaced party would have prevented; but the other discovered so plainly, that the endeavour to preserve the Parliament was with a design to overthrow and destroy the new ministry, that they could by no means abate that article, and thereby give them the opportunity.

“This made the breach irreconcilable; the displaced people showed the uttermost resentment, declared themselves disobliged to the highest, repre-

sented the ministry as the nation's enemies upon all occasions, and left no stone unturned, by inflaming the people against them, running down the credit, exposing them as friends to the French Jacobites, and everything that was bad.

"The ministry, on the other hand, took measures to establish themselves, and were, no question, driven to make use both of means and hands which they never intended to make use of; for to such a height were the breaches by this means brought that, as nothing was omitted on one side to attack, run down, and overthrow them; so nothing was omitted on the side of the ministry to preserve themselves. These unhappy exigencies drove both parties to do things which their own friends blame them for, and which themselves acknowledge, nothing but such a necessity could have obliged them to do, such as making *twelve Lords*<sup>4</sup> on one hand, bringing in the *Occasional Bill* on the other, and several the like extraordinary steps, which are buried in this relation, rather because they should now be forgotten among us than that they are not to the purpose.

"The *White Staff*, which is the clue we are to trace in this *Secret History*, was now given into the hand which, as was mentioned before, had been treated with so much impolitic contempt, and the Prime Ministry put upon that head, which, altho' they always found capable, yet they never suffered themselves to think he could have gotten the start of them, as they found he had; the attempt made upon his life by a murtherer<sup>5</sup> was so horrid, that even

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<sup>4</sup> Created to overcome the Whig majority in the House of Lords.

<sup>5</sup> Guiscard.

those who would not have been sorry to see his fall, yet were satisfied to see him escape such a tragical attempt; and as the mischief hastened his advancement on the Queen's side, so it abated something of the resentment on the other; and some had hopes that a reconciliation at least of measures, if not of persons, might have been brought about upon that occasion.

“Nor was the Prime Minister wanting to show his readiness to bring things to an accommodation, but the breach was too wide, things were gone too far. No confidence could be framed among them, without which an accommodation was altogether unpracticable; nor was there ever wanting agents, on both sides, whose business it was to prevent every approach towards an agreement; and to represent to either side that the other were not to be trusted; that at the same time that application was made to heal the breach, measures were secretly laid to supplant one another, and the like.

“By these and such like arts, and with the addition of some unhappy practices, the breach grew every day wider; and all reconciliation of parties and measures being laid aside, the party war grew up to that extravagant height, as the like has not been known in these nations since the Civil War; for at the Revolution things came sooner to a head.

“The *White Staff* however kept its station, and the policy and management of the Prime Minister defeated all the attempts which the displaced party had made, or saw room to make, to break in upon him; in every attack they were repulsed; in every battle he had the victory; and albeit they never failed to renew their assaults, yet they found him

so well fortified in every part, that many began to see their mistake, and to own they had better have accommodated things at first; that they never thought he could have maintained himself in such a manner as they found; and that no head but his could have extricated itself out of such labyrinths, escaped so many snares, and brought himself out of so many difficulties, as he had done. The very things which they thought to have overthrown him most effectually by, they found themselves obliged to turn to his advantage; and he received the thanks even of some of their own friends, in those parts of his administration which they thought were most open to their censure."

*Defoe Disclaims His "White Staff" Tracts and Describes the Ways of Hackney Writers<sup>6</sup>*

"Besides this account, which was very satisfying, he<sup>7</sup> told me that he had been curious to get infor-

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<sup>6</sup> From "The Secret History of the Secret History of the White Staff, Purse and Mitre. Written by a Person of Honour." 1715, pp. 16-20.

<sup>7</sup> The narrator is a Quaker whom the author of the tract is supposed to have overheard at a coffee-house affirming his belief that the "White Staff" tracts had not been written by or at the direction of Lord Oxford. The author followed the Quaker from the coffee-house, and they continued the subject at a tavern, the selection given forming part of their conversation. The remainder of the tract is in the main devoted to the misdeeds of a certain hack-writer, William Pittis, who had replied to Defoe in *The Secret History of the Mitre and Purse*, a pamphlet written ostensibly in the interest of Atterbury and Harcourt, but really to enable Pittis to revenge himself upon Lord Oxford, who had been instrumental in convicting him for writing, ten years before, a tract obnoxious to the government. Pittis later attacked Defoe and charged him with writing the pamphlet from which this selection is taken. It is helpful to have such a contemporary ascription, but no careful student of Defoe will fail

mation among the writers of pamphlets, to find out, if he could, either who had a hand in it, or who they supposed to have so; that he had found one friend, who was acquainted with that person, who common fame had taxed with it in public,<sup>8</sup> and that he had obtained from his said friend to go to that person. It seems, he found the poor man in a very dangerous condition, having had a fit of an apoplexy, and being very weak, insomuch that his life was despaired of; but, mentioning the said books to him, and that the town charged him with being the author of them, and that he had written them by direction of the said Lord Oxford, the said person answered, that they did him a great deal of wrong; neither did he believe that the Lord Oxford was any way concerned, directly or indirectly, in the said books, and that he believed his Lordship had never heard of them till they were published.<sup>9</sup>

to recognize his hand in this vain attempt to disclaim his own too notorious pamphlets.

<sup>8</sup> I. e., Defoe himself.

<sup>9</sup> The Harley Papers show that on August 26, 1714, Defoe wrote a letter to Lord Oxford, and sent him a tract written in his interest. It is not clear that this was already printed, nor is it named, but the following words seem to fit the three "White Staff" tracts and no others: "This, therefore, is but an introduction, and speaks all upon generals, and will be followed with another and another, as things present and as the distinction between your Lordship's administration and that which would have followed is absolutely necessary. My next will state that part more clearly than anything seems to have done yet, I mean within the reach of common observation." On November 23, 1714, by which time it was clear that he was to expect no favor from the new king and the Whig administration, Lord Oxford wrote to a correspondent, "The Whigs brag in print they caused the two books of the White Staff to be written; and the policy is plain. He ought to be treated as a fool who had the staff, if he ever encouraged a vindication." Perhaps Oxford did not encourage Defoe, but he surely knew that the latter was his would-be vindicator.

It was true, he said, that he happened to see some of the copy, while it was at the press, and that being desired to look upon it, he did revise two or three sheets of it, and marked some things in them, which he disliked; but for the rest he could safely swear he never saw them, or knew what was in them, till after they were printed, nor did he know whether the things which he had marked (as above said) were altered in the print, *Yea* or *No*.

“The person who went to him, then asked him if he did not believe, that they were written at the desire and by the directions of people, who traded in such books, and who did it merely to get money by them, without any other design this way or that way respecting the parties, or divisions of the people. And he answered, *He did verily believe it was so*.

“My friend told me he could not question the truth of what a man, as it were stepping into the grave, had so freely declared, and that he thought, men could not answer charging things publicly upon others, without any proof of them, saving what was suggested to them, by the surmises of their own evil thoughts, or of other evil persons, and he did not know how men could answer wronging others in such a manner.

“But that which farther than all this confirmed this Quaker, as he said, in his believing that it was not either of the persons above mentioned who had written these books, was a farther information, which he told me he had met with from two several persons, who as he said, were of the tribe of writers, who are by the world called *hackneys*, as before,



who gave him some account how these books were managed, and by whom.

“ ‘There are, it seems,’ said he, ‘several clubs, or sets of these men who are kept in constant employment by the booksellers, or publishers of pamphlets, to write on such and such subjects, as the said booksellers shall direct; and these said booksellers, or publishers, join together their stocks, when such books are written, to pay as well the charge of writing as of printing the same, and then unite their interests in their way of trade, for the more effectual vending the said books. And I am assured,’ said he farther, ‘that these persons do not consult the side or party on which, or in whose behalf the said books may be supposed to plead; but the great thing, which they regard, is that the said books *may sell*; and if they find it sells, so as to answer their design, they go on, perhaps, to employ the same persons to write an answer, or answers thereto,’ and that he was satisfied by his friend that these books of the *White Staff* were written by some of these men called *hackneys*, as aforesaid, and by the order of and for the wages given by some of the said booksellers, publishers, &c. And that no other persons, or designs were to be found concerned therein.

“I told him, this was a very infamous practice, if it was true; but desired to know if he had good grounds to believe the same. He told me he thought he had sufficient ground to believe that there were such people, and that there were such sets of men, who employed these writers, and of this he had such evidence, that, as he said, he was able to name sev-

eral men, who were so employed, and also those, who did employ them; he likewise told me, he was assured of their doing this upon the single view of gaining by the vending or selling their books without any other design, not being concerned what cause, or what principle these men write for or upon, seeing, as he was informed, it was their frequent practice to employ one man, or set of men to write a book upon this or that subject; and if that book succeeded, that is to say, if it sold well, then to employ others, or perhaps the same hands, to write answers to the same book. And to confirm this, he told me he could assure me, that the book entitled the *Purse and the Mitre*, which was written in opposition to the former book the *Staff*, were written by the order and at the expence of the very same men, who had before caused the said *Secret History of the White Staff* to be written; that the writer, or *hackney*, who was thus employed was one Pittis, of whom more shall be spoken afterwards.

“And that albeit they were published by a different hand, the principles were the very same, and they were published and sold on the account of the same set of booksellers; and this, he said, he was able to give sufficient testimony to the truth of, if there were any occasion.”

*Defoe Complains of the Pamphlets Laid at  
His Door*<sup>10</sup>

“This brings me again to that other oppression which as I said, I suffer under, and which, I think, is

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<sup>10</sup> From “An Appeal to Honour and Justice, Tho’ it be of His Worst Enemies. By Daniel De Foe. Being A True Account of his Conduct in Publick Affairs.” 1715, pp. 46, 47.

of a kind, that no man ever suffered under so much as myself. And this is to have every libel, every pamphlet, be it ever so foolish, so malicious, so unmannerly, or so dangerous, be laid at my door, and be called publicly by my name. It has been in vain for me to struggle with this injury; it has been in vain for me to protest, to declare solemnly, nay, if I would have sworn that I had no hand in such a book, or paper, never saw it, never read it, and the like, it was the same thing.

“My name has been hackneyed about the street by the hawkers, and about the coffee-houses by the politicians, at such a rate, as no patience could bear. One man will swear to the style; another to this or that expression; another to the way of printing; and all so positive that it is to no purpose to oppose it.

“I published once, to stop this way of using me, that I would print nothing but what I set my name to, and I held it for a year or two<sup>11</sup>; but it was all one, I had the same treatment. I have now resolved, for some time, to write nothing at all; and yet I find it the same thing. Two books<sup>12</sup> lately published being called mine, for no other reason that I know of, than that, at the request of the printer, I revised two sheets of them at the press, and that they seemed to be written in favour of a certain person; which person also, as I have been assured, had no hand in them, or any knowledge of them, till they were published in print.

“This is a flail I have no fence against, but to

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<sup>11</sup> The promise was made in 1712, but it was not kept to the extent indicated.

<sup>12</sup> Parts I and II of *The Secret History of the White Staff*.

complain of the injustice of it, and that is but *the shortest way* to be treated with more injustice."

*Defoe Compares Himself with the Prophet,  
Jeremiah*<sup>13</sup>

"And this leads me to several particulars, in which my case may, without any arrogance, be likened to that of the Sacred Prophet,<sup>14</sup> except only the vast disparity of the persons.

"No sooner was the Queen dead, and the King, as right required, proclaimed, but the rage of men increased upon me to that degree, that the threats and insults I received were such as I am not able to express. If I offered to say a word in favour of the present Settlement, it was called fawning and turning round again; on the other hand, tho' I have meddled neither one way or other, nor written one book since the Queen's death,<sup>15</sup> yet a great many things are called by my name, and I bear every day the reproaches which all the answerers of those books cast as well upon the subject as the authors. I have not seen or spoken to my Lord of Oxford but once<sup>16</sup> since the King's landing, nor received the least message, order, or writing from his Lordship, or any

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<sup>13</sup> From the same, p. 55 to end.

<sup>14</sup> Defoe had specially in mind Lamén. 20, 10.

<sup>15</sup> About fifteen tracts had been *published* for him between the death of the queen and the appearance of the *Appeal*. We do not know when these words of the *Appeal* were *written*.

<sup>16</sup> These two important words are unfortunately omitted in the reprint of the *Appeal* to be found in Aitken's *Later Stuart Tracts*, a volume which contains over two hundred pages selected from Defoe's writings.

other way corresponded with him,<sup>17</sup> yet he bears the reproach of my writing in his defence, and I the rage of men for doing it. I cannot say it is no affliction to me to be thus used, tho' my being entirely clear of the facts, is a true support to me.

"I am unconcerned at the rage and clamour of *Party-men*; but I cannot be unconcerned to hear men, who I think are good men and good Christians, prepossessed and mistaken about me. However, I cannot doubt but some time or other it will please God to open such men's eyes. A constant, steady adhering to *personal virtue*, and to *public peace*, which, I thank God, I can appeal to him, has always been my practice, will *AT LAST* restore me to the opinion of sober and impartial men, and that is all I desire. What it will do with those who are resolutely partial and unjust I cannot say, neither is that much my concern. But I cannot forbear giving one example of the hard treatment I receive, which has happened, even while I am writing this tract. I have six children, I have educated them as well as my circumstances will permit, and so as I hope shall recommend them to better usage than their father meets with in the world. I am not indebted one shilling in the world for any part of their education, or for anything else belonging to bringing them up; yet the author of the *Flying Post* published lately<sup>18</sup> that I never paid for the education

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<sup>17</sup> George I landed on September 16, 1714; some days later Defoe wrote Lord Oxford a letter the substance of which shows that he still regarded himself as an agent in the statesman's interest.

<sup>18</sup> This attack appeared in the *Flying Post* for December 7, 1714. If we are to take Defoe literally, he must have been writing the conclusion of his *Appeal* shortly after, and his

of any of my children. If any<sup>19</sup> man in Britain has a shilling to demand of me for any part of their education, or anything belonging<sup>20</sup> to them, let them come for it.

"But these men care not what injurious things they write, nor what they say, whether truth or not, if it may but raise a reproach on me, tho' it were to be my ruin. I may well appeal to the honour and justice of my worst enemies in such cases as this.

*"Conscia Mens Recti fama Mendacia Ridet."*

### *Conclusion by the Publisher*

*"While this was at the press, and the copy thus far finished, the Author was seized with a violent fit of an apoplexy, whereby he was disabled finishing what he designed in his further defence, and continuing now for about six weeks in a weak and languishing condition, neither able to go on, or likely to recover, at least in any short time, his friends thought it not fit to delay the publication of this any longer; if he recovers, he may be able to finish what he began; if not, it is the opinion of most that know him, that the treatment which he here complains of, and some others that he would have spoken of have been the apparent cause of his disaster."*

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stroke of apoplexy must have come not long before or after the new year. If so, he managed to write and publish more pamphlets than any other man ever did, in all probability, under such circumstances.

<sup>19</sup> The original read *an*.

<sup>20</sup> The original has *belong*, which may be right.



## CHAPTER IX

### A JOURNALIST SPY—1716–1718

**D**URING the year 1716 Defoe, so far as we know, published scarcely a book and only a moderate number of pamphlets. There is evidence, however, that he was writing for certain newspapers, and in May he began the publication of his monthly organ, *Mercurius Politicus*, which was designed to be the Tory counterpart of the better known *Political State*, edited by Abel Boyer, a French refugee important in the journalism of the day. As the *Mercurius Politicus* was mainly a compilation, we may presume that as soon as he got it fairly started, Defoe was able to prepare a number without great trouble, either alone, or with the assistance of some of his children, or of a hired amanuensis, and hence that sufficient time was left on his hands for the large amount of writing he managed to do during the years 1717 and 1718. It should be added that now more than ever Defoe needed to maintain anonymity as completely as possible, and that, as a rule, his productions of this period are to

be determined only through charges of authorship made by hostile journalists and through internal evidence of his handiwork furnished by the books and tracts themselves. Obviously under such conditions students must exercise great caution in their ascriptions, but just as obviously an astonishing amount of work has been identified as indisputably his. One method of tracking him is comparatively easy. He had become so inured to his profession that he was almost certain to take sides—often both sides—in any controversy that interested the public. Hence search in the newspapers of the time for advertisements of pamphlets and examination of the bound volumes of tracts so numerous for the period is sure to result in the discovery of many contributions made by him to the debates, political, economic, theological, which occupied the attention of that contentious age. For example, in the spring of 1716 he wrote several pamphlets on the much discussed Triennial Act, which prolonged the life of the Parliament then sitting, and in 1717, he put his rapid pen almost literally to a gallop in his contributions to the once famous Bangorian Controversy, which raged around a sermon on the relations of Church and State preached by Benjamin Hoadly, the low-church bishop of Bangor. As a Presbyterian and a social outcast Defoe seems to have taken special delight in whetting on the Church combatants and in impudently attacking, safe under

his mask of anonymity, dignitaries who would have scorned him as an antagonist.<sup>1</sup> Then, human chameleon that he was, he would solemnly write a tract deploring the evil effects of those dissensions among Christians which he was doing his best to foment.

It is impossible to give here even in outline an account of all the phases of Defoe's activity during the year 1717. He had a violent political controversy with the Deist John Toland and with Abel Boyer, which resulted in serious charges against his own morality as a journalist.<sup>2</sup> Our hero defended himself with great disingenuousness and anger, partly in order to keep his editorship of *Mercurius Politicus* from becoming widely known, partly in order to discredit Boyer's shrewd suspicion that a certain book purporting to be the *Minutes of the Negotiations* of the late French diplomat Mesnager had been entirely forged by Defoe in order to give a favorable view of Lord Oxford's conduct at the time of the making of the Treaty of Utrecht. It seems practically certain that this book was the forgery Boyer thought it, and that Defoe was the forger, but it is at least clear that the latter did not cherish an implacable enmity to the patron who had disowned him. We may also set over against this rather rascally performance the exemplary *Memoirs of the Church of Scotland*, which our tireless

<sup>1</sup> See the selection given at p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> See the selection from *Mercurius Politicus* given at p. 158.

journalist had published some months before. Yet one doubts whether such attempts at balancing are warranted, when, at the close of 1717 and the beginning of 1718, one finds Defoe, the controversies with Boyer and Toland and about rather than with the supporters and opponents of Hoadly having subsided, plunging blithely into another pamphlet war begun by Matthew Tindal on the occasion of the break of Walpole and Townshend with Sunderland and Stanhope. A journalistic Ishmael one may call him, but perhaps his methods of pamphlet-fighting and his motives for engaging in such squabbles prompt one rather to compare him with a rebel Mexican brigand of the present day.

More real importance attaches, however, to the assistance Defoe at this period rendered the Jacobite printer Nathaniel Mist than to the controversies he waged with many distinguished people. This is because the "Letters Introductory" he began to write in Mist's *Weekly Journal; or Saturday's Post* were not only good essays which showed how well Defoe could profit from the lessons given him by Steele and Addison, but were also the prototypes of the leading editorials we now read in our newspapers. The other journalists of the age affected to despise Defoe as a turn-coat and an ignoramus, but his knowledge was plainly far more varied and practical than theirs, he added new features to the papers he founded or wrote for, and rivals and suc-

cessors saw that it was wise to follow in his footsteps.

With regard to Defoe's personal relations with Mist himself we are not very fully informed. The printer, who had been a sailor, was evidently a rash, choleric man whose Jacobitism was continually getting him into trouble with the authorities. Like Defoe he had to undergo the pillory, and he was much oftener and much longer in prison than the man who now became his chief contributor and adviser. Defoe's business was to soften the Jacobitism of the *Weekly Journal* and, in consequence, to keep Mist out of the clutches of the law, but on at least one occasion it seems as if the man whose duty it was to restrain his employer really pushed him forward in a very dangerous affair. On the whole, however, Defoe, with some intermissions, was a most useful editor to Mist during three years, 1717-1720, and even after he transferred his services to another Tory printer, John Applebee, he was kind to Mist, when the latter was in prison, and on one occasion he may even have spared that irascible person's life.

This occasion is assigned by Defoe's biographer Lee to the year 1724, and is said to have been due to Mist's discovery at that late date that Defoe, while editing the *Weekly Journal*, had been in secret relations with those authorities who had so often arrested and imprisoned Mist himself. The

printer, so Lee holds, was then in prison and, while Defoe was paying him a visit, drew his sword and rushed at his former editor. The cool Defoe escaped injury, slightly wounded his assailant, and then called in a physician to attend him. Unfortunately this story of Lee's rests on the identification of Defoe with the hero of an incident described by Defoe in his contributions to the *Weekly* published by Applebee. The journalist, who was certainly in many respects magnanimous, kind, and physically brave, may have acted as his admiring biographer says he did, but no clear proof has yet been found that the encounter ever took place, and there are reasons for suspecting that it may have been wholly imaginary, or that its details were exaggerated by Defoe.

Much the same thing may be said of the theory held by Lee that certain mysterious troubles that befell Defoe in the last years of his life were due to the machinations of the revengeful Mist. Mist may have been implacable, and some may hold that he had reason to hate both the persecuting government and Defoe who had been its spy wearing the mask of friendship; but we really know little or nothing of the personal relations of the two men, and, as Mist spent the last years of his life, 1728 to 1737, as an indigent exile in France, it is not likely that he can have had any serious influence upon Defoe's later fortunes. We do know, however, that,



although Defoe may have been at times a rash counsellor to Mist, he saved his employer from punishment in 1718, that during the period of his closest connection with it he made the *Weekly Journal* one of the best newspapers in the kingdom, that after he left it Mist was much more continuously in trouble with the government, that at times Defoe helped the struggling paper with his contributions, and finally that in 1721, when Mist was in prison, his former editor supervised for the prisoner's benefit two volumes of literary selections from the columns of the paper. It is not a bad record, even when we admit that Defoe's acceptance of the post of spy was discreditable, and even if we throw out the romantic story of his having given the angry Mist his life.

These obscure matters have been dwelt upon chiefly because they illustrate well the difficulties that beset the biographers of men who lived before the days when the public began to take an interest in minute details concerning human life in all its phases. If Defoe had not been a journalist who often provoked other journalists into making personal attacks upon him, we should know even less of him than we do, and, of course, we must always make due allowance for the fact that much of our information about him comes from his enemies. We need not believe that his house at Stoke Newington was guarded with extra locks and bolts because its owner constantly feared arrest, but we must believe

that neither he nor his family relished the fact that on one occasion his death was announced, and an elegy both premature and uncomplimentary was hawked about the streets. He may have grown callous himself, but those near to him must have dreaded to open a Whig newspaper of the period for fear of encountering a vile attack upon him. He himself, we have reason to affirm, was dreadfully alarmed when in 1718 the government took notice of certain communications to Mist's paper that were regarded as treasonable in tone, and the authorship of which might be traced to Defoe himself. We have to picture him to ourselves on the eve of the publication of *Robinson Crusoe* as an aging man conscious that his name was a by-word, constantly afraid that he would offend the government by writing himself, or else by allowing to be published, some paper deemed seriously, not venially disaffected, equally in dread lest his Jacobite employers, who paid him well, might discover his true status, always eager to pile guinea on guinea that he might provide for his daughters, marriageable and unmarried, and finally so inured to writing that despite painful attacks of the gout and the stone, he could not be satisfied unless he were forever producing copy.

His bibliography for 1718, the year during which he may have written a part at least of *Robinson*

*Crusoe*, is not so striking in amount as that for 1717, but it is still impressive. He wrote several political tracts, he tried his hand at biography, he published a volume continuing the famous *Letters writ by a Turkish Spy*, which gave him some practice in fiction and hence should be regarded as an important precursor of his masterpiece,<sup>3</sup> he showed his growing interest in fiction by inserting several narratives into the second volume of his popular manual, *The Family Instructor*, and finally he was almost preternaturally active as a journalist. He may have been concerned in the compilation of a series of yearly volumes of political history which appeared for six years (1716–1721) under the title, *The Annals of King George*. He founded, or else was certainly instrumental in launching a new tri-weekly paper, *The Whitehall Evening Post*. He continued to edit *Mercurius Politicus*, and then, giving the materials used for that journal a Whiggish turn, he prepared for the year 1718 a similar monthly, *Mercurius Britannicus*, copies of which are exceedingly rare. Lastly he contributed steadily to *Mist's Weekly Journal*, some of his articles exhibiting literary as well as journalistic merit. In other words, he entered upon his sixtieth year, and completed the manuscript of *Robinson Crusoe*, if, as is probable, that great story was printed as soon as it was written, the most

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<sup>3</sup> See the selection at p. 168.

copious and the best trained writer of popular prose literature of all kinds then to be found in Great Britain.

There is no space and there is little need to discuss this mass of writing save to call attention to the facts that it helped to increase the ease of Defoe's homely vernacular style, that it gave him practice in dialogue and in narrative, that it developed his powers of invention, that it increased his mastery in the use of details to secure the effects of verisimilitude; in short, that it helped to make it possible, that after writing many books possessing no claims to greatness, he should suddenly produce a work of fiction which immediately took that position as a world classic which it seems likely never to lose. It is, in other words, the effect upon himself of the writings of this period that chiefly counts. A word should, however, be given to one short production that stands out in vivid merit. This is his account of the supposed destruction of the Island of St. Vincent, by a volcanic eruption, an article which was resurrected by Lee from the pages of *Mist's Weekly Journal* for July 5, 1718. It long passed with critics as one of the most successful of Defoe's imaginative compositions, since they assumed that he was merely trying to hoax his readers into believing in a terrible event which he knew could never have occurred. Recent investigation has shown, however, that, as in the case of the *True Relation*

of the *Apparition of One Mrs. Veal*, Defoe invented next to nothing, that he was a skilful reporter rather than a brilliant hoaxer. Reports of the destruction of the island had reached London and had been published in other newspapers, and there is reason to believe, not only that Defoe lent them credence, but that he was somewhat more obstinate than other journalists in continuing to maintain that the first accounts of the catastrophe were correct, despite later advices which had greatly reduced its dimensions. The facts of the case tend to diminish his reputation for splendid creative mendacity, but they leave us abundant reason for praising his extraordinary faculty for giving life-likeness to his narrative and descriptive writings.

It is time, however, to turn to the selections chosen to represent his work for the three busy years that immediately preceded the publication of *Robinson Crusoe*, and once more it is necessary to assure the reader that no quotations, however ample the scale, can do justice to so versatile and so indefatigable a writer. If he had been capable of wearing himself out, he would surely have done it on the eve of the appearance of his masterpiece, which in that case would probably not have been a masterpiece. But he seems to have been made of some elastic material as strong as steel. His productions were unending, and their fair level of execution is almost as surprising as their number.

*Journalistic Amenities—The Pot Calls the Kettle Black<sup>4</sup>*

"But before we proceed to the business of this month, we are obliged once more to trouble the reader with defending our collections against the insolent challenge of a Frenchman, [Abel Boyer,] who sets up for a statesman, and is continually piquing at this work, because he finds it rise upon the ruins of his own. [*The Political State of Great Britain.*]

"This Gascoign should have passed without my notice, *as indeed his writings generally do,*<sup>5</sup> had he not, with his native insolence, charged us again in his last *Political Bauble*, with writing *scandal upon the government*. This, as it is impeaching us before the judicature of the whole nation, we cannot pass over without an answer. WE know the drift of this *contemptible wretch*, and we despise him; WE know how long, and with what assiduous malice he has watched for an opportunity to turn *informer* against this work; WE challenge him to prove one scandal upon the government raised by this work, equal to two unsufferable scandals which he has raised, as well against the King, as the whole admin-

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<sup>4</sup> From *Mercurius Politicus* for July, 1717, pp. 407-409. The title runs "Mercurius Politicus: Being Monthly Observations On the Affairs of Great Britain, With the Most Material Occurrences in Europe, For the Month of July, 1717. Containing in Particular, [a table of contents under 13 heads]. By a Lover of Old England. London: Printed for J. Morphew near Stationers-Hall, Where may be had, those for May, &c. 1716 to this present Time. Price One Shilling each." For some unknown reason volumes and single numbers of this periodical are very scarce. No absolutely complete set—May, 1716-December, 1720—has of late years been traced.

<sup>5</sup> In Roman in the original, the editorial itself being in italics.



istration; (1) in suggesting that to write an impartial history of fact can be a scandal to the government; and (2) to suggest that either the King or any person in the government can bear, *much less be pleased with* the surfeiting *Party Flattery* which runs through his whole collections; which flattery, in their turn, he equally bestowed upon the Earl of Oxford, and all *that Ministry*, and would again upon Prince Pluto and his Ministers of State, if they were uppermost; all which we shall prove out of his own books in due time, when we shall not fail to make him appear to be as great a SLANDERER of this work, as he has been lately *proved to be*, of the Person who he falsely charges with being the author [editor] of it [i. e. Daniel Defoe<sup>6</sup>]. As he is the scum of *Hackney Scribblers*, as such we shall from hence forward use him; one that upbraiding other authors with writing for PENCE, knows at the same time, *and the world knows*, he has gotten his bread, ever *since the last of his wooden shoes*, by mere scribbling and writing, or rather robbing other writers in a most scandalous manner; injuriously patching up his writings with what other men have written; pirating even upon copies which he has sold to other men; and basely reprinting things for himself after he has taken money for them of his bookseller; which *foul trade* of his, together with (*if fame says true*) the open avowed practice of almost all abominable vices, having rendered him as scandalous to mankind as most men ever were, has also made the town sick of his productions, and men of worth justly begin to abhor and decline him.”

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<sup>6</sup> A short unimportant paragraph is omitted.

The statement that Boyer had been proved to be a slanderer of Defoe was a reference to a letter written by the latter to the *St. James's Post* denying that he was the forger of Mesnager's *Minutes*, and also claiming that he had written a pamphlet on the Triennial Act which Boyer had praised and reprinted, but had not written a tract on the same subject which Boyer had charged upon him. To this letter Defoe added the following postscript:—"Mr Boyer has also now published the titles of a great many books and pamphlets, which he charges me with writing (no less than fourteen in number) but is so unfortunate in his spleen, that of all the number, there is but one that I was sole author of, not above three that I ever had any hand in, and five or six that I never saw in my life."

Both letter and postscript were reprinted in *Mercurius Politicus* for July, 1717 (pp. 471-473). Not only was Defoe anxious to escape detection as the forger of Mesnager's *Minutes*,—a work which even such a partisan biographer as Lee accepts—but he was specially eager to discredit the report which both Boyer and Toland had circulated that he was the editor of *Mercurius Politicus*. That he did edit this periodical the letter given as the next selection plainly proves; that he was the author of all or nearly all the pamphlets Boyer attributed to him seems to be as clear as internal evidence of style and substance can make it.

*Defoe Describes His Work as a Spy*<sup>7</sup>

"Sir,—Though I doubt not but you have acquainted my Lord Stanhope<sup>8</sup> with what humble sense of his Lordship's goodness I received the account you were pleased to give me, that my little services are accepted, and that his Lordship is satisfied to go on upon the foot of former capitulations &c.; yet I confess, Sir, I have been anxious on many accounts, with respect as well to the service itself, as my own safety, lest my Lord may think himself ill served by me, even when I may have best performed my duty.

"I thought it therefore not only a debt to myself, but a duty to his Lordship, that I should give his Lordship a short account, as clear as I can, how far my former instructions empowered me to act, and, in a word, what this little piece of secret service is, for which I am so much a subject of his Lordship's present favour and bounty. It was in the Ministry of my Lord Townshend, when my Lord Chief Justice Parker, to whom I stand obliged for the favour, was pleased so far to state my case, that notwithstanding the misrepresentations under which I had suffered, and notwithstanding some mistakes which I was the first to acknowledge; I was so happy as to be believed in the professions I made of a sincere attachment to the interest of the present Government, and, speaking with all possible humility, I hope I have not dishonoured my Lord Parker's recommendation.

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<sup>7</sup> A letter to Mr. Charles Delafaye of the office of the secretary of state given in William Lee's "Daniel Defoe: his Life, and Recently Discovered Writings." 1869, Vol. I, x-xiii.

<sup>8</sup> Then secretary of state.

"In considering, after this, which way I might be rendered most useful to the Government, it was proposed by my Lord Townshend that I should still appear as if I were, as before, under the displeasure of the Government, and separated from the Whigs; and that I might be more serviceable in a kind of disguise, than if I appeared openly; and upon this foot a weekly paper, which I was at first directed to write, in opposition to a scandalous paper called the *Shift Shifted*, was laid aside, and the first thing I engaged in, was a monthly book called *Mercurius Politicus*, of which presently. In the interval of this, Dyer, the *News-Letter*-writer, having been dead, and Dormer, his successor, being unable by his troubles to carry on that work,<sup>9</sup> I had an offer of a share in the property, as well as in the management of that work.

"I immediately acquainted my Lord Townshend of it, who, by Mr. Buckley,<sup>10</sup> let me know it would be a very acceptable piece of service; for that letter was really very prejudicial to the public, and the most difficult to come at in a judicial way in case of offence given. My Lord was pleased to add, by Mr. Buckley, that he would consider<sup>11</sup> my service in that case, as he afterwards did.

"Upon this I engaged in it; and that so far, that

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<sup>9</sup> *Dyer's News Letter* was one of the most unreliable papers of the time. Dormer was in trouble because he was a Roman Catholic. No number of *Dormer's News Letter* during the time of Defoe's editorship seems yet to have been discovered.

<sup>10</sup> Apparently Samuel Buckley, printer and proprietor of the *Daily Courant*, who had a place in the office of the secretary of state.

<sup>11</sup> Reward in a pecuniary way.

though the property was not wholly my own, yet the conduct and government of the style and news was so entirely in me, that I ventured to assure his Lordship the sting of that mischievous paper would be entirely taken out, though it was granted that the style should continue Tory, as it was, that the party might be amused, and not set up another, which would have destroyed the design. And this part I therefore take entirely on myself still.

"This went on for a year, before my Lord Townshend went out of the office; and his Lordship, in consideration of this service, made me the appointment which Mr. Buckley knows of, with promise of a further allowance as service presented.

"My Lord Sunderland, to whose goodness I had many years ago been obliged, when I was in a secret Commission sent to Scotland,<sup>12</sup> was pleased to approve and continue this service, and the appointment annexed; and, with his Lordship's approbation, I introduced myself, in the disguise of a translator of the foreign news, to be so far concerned in this weekly paper of *Mist's*, as to be able to keep it within the circle of a secret management, also prevent the mischievous part of it; and yet neither *Mist* or any of those concerned with him, have the least guess or suspicion by whose direction I do it.

"But here it becomes necessary to acquaint my Lord (as I hinted to you, Sir,) that this paper, called the *Journal*, is not in myself in property, as the other, only in management; with this express difference, that if anything happens to be put in without my knowledge, which may give offence, or

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<sup>12</sup> In 1708.

if anything slips my observation which may be ill taken, his Lordship shall be sure always to know whether he has a servant to reprove, or a stranger to correct.

“Upon the whole, however, this is the consequence, that by this management, the *Weekly Journal*, and *Dormer’s Letter*, as also the *Mercurius Politicus*, which is in the same nature of management as the *Journal*, will be always kept (mistakes excepted) to pass as Tory papers, and yet be disabled and enervated, so as to do no mischief, or give any offence to the Government.

“I beg leave to observe, Sir, one thing more to his Lordship in my own behalf, and without which, indeed, I may, one time or other, run the risk of fatal misconstructions. I am, Sir, for this service, posted among Papists, Jacobites, and enraged High Tories—a generation who, I profess, my very soul abhors; I am obliged to hear traitorous expressions and outrageous words against his Majesty’s Person and Government, and his most faithful servants, and smile at it all, as if I approved it; I am obliged to take all the scandalous and, indeed, villainous papers that come, and keep them by me as if I would gather materials from them to put them into the news; nay, I often venture to let things pass which are a little shocking, that I may not render myself suspected.

“Thus I bow in the House of Rimmon, and must humbly recommend myself to his Lordship’s protection, or I may be undone the sooner by how much the more faithfully I execute the commands I am under.

“I forbear to enlarge. I beg you, Sir, to represent



these circumstances to his Lordship, in behalf of a faithful servant, that shall always endeavour to approve his fidelity by actions rather than words.

"I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

"Newington, April 26, 1718.

"DE FOE.

"P. S. I send you here one of the letters stopt at the press, as I mentioned to you; as to the manuscript of Sultan Galga,<sup>13</sup> another villainous paper, I sent the copy to my Lord Sunderland. If the original be of any service, it is ready at your first orders."

*An Invitation to Bishop Hoadly to Join the Quakers<sup>14</sup>*

"I rejoice, Benjamin, that thou hast published true doctrine, and hast given thy testimony with us

<sup>13</sup> This gross libel upon George I was actually printed, but it is not at all likely that Defoe had any hand in its composition.

<sup>14</sup> This selection is chosen to represent the series of tracts which Defoe, impersonating a Quaker, addressed to some of his distinguished contemporaries. It also represents his voluminous contributions to the once famous Bangorian Controversy over the "Nature of the Kingdom of the Church of Christ," which was carried on in 1717 between the latitudinarians and the high churchmen. Benjamin Hoadly (1676-1761), the most famous clerical advocate of low church and Whiggish principles and the precipitator of the controversy, was successively Bishop of Bangor, Hereford, Salisbury, and Winchester. Defoe's impudent proposal that the prelate abandon his bishopric and join the Quakers derives additional point from the fact that during the six years he was Bishop of Bangor Hoadly seems never once to have visited his diocese. The title of the tract from which the selection is taken runs, "A Declaration of Truth to Benjamin Hoadly, One of the High Priests of the Land, and Of the Degree whom Men call Bishops. By a Ministering Friend, who writ to Tho. Bradbury, a Dealer in many Words." 1717, pp. 18-20.

to the truth which we on so good and solid foundations have received; and I question not but thou wilt be assisted by the Spirit of Truth to pull down and overthrow the whole power, hierarchy and constitution of that people who call themselves *The Church*; verily, they are usurpers of the Kingdom and throne of King Jesus; and thou shalt be a champion of the truth, in that thou shalt overthrow those ecclesiastic *Principalities* and *Powers*, which are not of God, and shalt establish true religion in that mighty Principle of Heavenly Light, in which it is only to be found.

“This is that inward Revelation which thou hast been obliged to bear thy testimony unto, viz. that Light which *persuades* the minds of men, and whereby every step of reformation which hath been made in the world hath been justified, and which, as thou sayest well, is all the account which Protestants can give for their being reformed from the People called Papists.

“And doubtless thou hast by the same arguments justified all those, the people of the Lord, who *being persuaded* in themselves of their being guided by Heavenly Light, have separated and withdrawn from these usurpations, of which thou hast spoken so worthily.

“And what remains, beloved Friend Benjamin, but that thou shouldst, according as thou hast worthily begun, and according to the Light which shineth in thy mind, *separate thyself* from these usurpers of unrighteous authority, and joining thyself with *the Friends* to Truth, shouldst bear thy testimony against all ungodliness; for verily, Benjamin, thou canst not but see and abhor the doc-

trine which these men teach, saying, 'We are the Church, and power is with us;' which thou knowest is false, and is not of God, and that the power which they use is not of God, but is the power of men, tending to ungodly dominion and usurpation, such as is that of the Pope of Rome, which nevertheless, they have disowned while they yet practice.

"For verily, Benjamin, it seemeth to me that thou who hast received such Light, and hast acknowledged the truths which are directly contrary to these men, canst not any longer continue among them, or wear those profane ensigns of idolatry, whereby thou art distinguished from other men, even in a manner which thou thyself knowest is not appointed by King Jesus. For verily, Benjamin, the robes of distinction which thou wearest, and wherewith thou art honoured among men, are the ensigns of that usurped power which thou hast so worthily condemned, and thou canst not longer abide among those who thou knowest are the enemies to the Light which thou hast received, and who walk contrary to the doctrine which thou hast taught, and which we, the Lord's People, have so many years ago received.

"Wherefore I am moved to advertise thee, in behalf of the truth, that thou shouldst not delay any longer joining thyself unto the Lord's People, whose cause thou hast already so worthily pleaded. For why shouldst thou not cause thy life and thy doctrine to conform unto each other? And why shouldst thou decline to profess openly thy adherence to the Lord's People, whilst thou dost not decline to teach the principles which they believe, and which they have received from the beginning?"

*The Turkish Spy Describes Divination By Wands*<sup>15</sup>

To Muley Hamet Mahomozzi, an Egyptian at Medina, a Master in the Study of Magic.

"Thou knowest, old friend Muley, that I<sup>16</sup> always condemned the Art thou hast so many years made thy study; that I thought it an unperforming romancing piece of froth; that I recommended to thee rather the study of antiquity and history, and to restore to the world the first ages of the Arabs, and the mighty wars and magnanimous deeds of our ancestors, the Saracens; the founding their glorious Empire, since devolved upon the invincible Sultan, our glorious Emperor, upon whose head be ten thousand years of joy in the bright paths of paradise.

"Otherwise I recommended to thy capable genius the study of Astronomy, the search into the motions, magnitude, distance, revolutions, and eclipses of all the heavenly bodies; but to turn sorcerer and magician in thy old age, and to have all those illuminated parts which formed thy genius, and made thee

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<sup>15</sup> From "A Continuation of Letters Written by a Turkish Spy at Paris. Giving an impartial Account to the Divan at Constantinople of the most Remarkable Transactions of Europe, and discovering several intrigues and Secrets of the Christian Courts, especially of that of France; continued from the Year 1687, to the Year 1693. Written originally in Arabick, Translated into Italian, and from thence into English." 1718, pp. 289-293. Book IV, Letter VIII.

This book, which is unknown to most students of Defoe, was assigned to him by James Crossley upon unimpeachable internal evidence. It was published by William Taylor, who the next year issued *Robinson Crusoe*. It seems to be very rare, whereas the original *Letters writ by a Turkish Spy* of John Paul Marana may be easily obtained in numerous editions.

<sup>16</sup> The writer is "Mahmut, an Arabian at Paris."

capable of mounting thy thoughts up to heaven; I say, to have these all sink down to hell; and instead of ranging through the shining mazes of light in the summits of paradise, be groping continually in the darkness of Tophet, where you can have no light but that of the infernal pit, no oracle but that of the Arch-Devil Beelzebub, and in which thy highest qualification or acquirement must be that of bringing evil tidings to the world; this is an unaccountable folly.

“But I found thee obstinate and unpersuadable, so I left thee to go on till old age and experience should bring thee to see thyself in the wrong, and that all the wonderful pretences thou hast made to the knowledge of hidden things, amount to no more than the tail of a roasted horse.

“And now after thirty years study, and all the searches thou hast made into the dark regions of horror; after all thy acquaintance with the inhabitants of the air, and with the world of spirits; here’s a device among the Nazarenes, that, I dare say, has outdone thee in all that thou hast not only arrived to thyself, but in all that thou hast ever heard of that any one else arrived to; nay, I much question whether the Prince of Evil Spirits himself, were he permitted to assume human shape, could act the like amazing things as this man has done.

“It is a Religieuse,<sup>17</sup> or a student, as he calls himself, of the City of Leon, who carries about with him a shaking rod. I fancy it sometimes to be just such another as that miraculous rod which Moses carried in his hand when he stretched it out to bring plagues and desolation upon thy forefathers, the

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<sup>17</sup> Defoe often made mistakes in his French.

Egyptians. This priest, by the means of this rod or wand, discovers treason, conspiracies, murther, and robbery; finds out lost treasure, forgotten land; marks secret adulteries; and, in a word, detects all sorts of fraud, lying, and malicious, false accusations.

“It was presently said this man dealt with the Devil, and they talked of burning him for a wizard or familiar; but he confounded them with asking, whether it was the Devil’s business to detect crimes, or to prompt men to crimes; to do good, or to do evil; intimating that his rod was qualified to expose wickedness, discover all sorts of villanies, and bring offenders to justice, but had no power to prompt or encourage any thing that was evil. And this saved the man from censure.

“There is no more doubt of the truth of his performance, than there is possibility of guessing by what means it is performed; he is now in this city [Paris], where he does wonders, and the world is astonished at him. Monsieur, the King’s brother, hid a great parcel of money in his garden, and sunk a steel box with some jewels in a fountain of water; but the shaking wand discovered both immediately. The Princess of Condé discovered by it a servant who had stolen several pieces of plate from her toilette, particularly two large silver candlesticks, tho’ the robbery had been committed almost three years before. It is impossible to question the truth of the stories they tell of this man, and his wondrous rod, unless one would doubt the whole city, and believe every one you meet a party to the fraud.

“For my part, I know not what to think of this man; for as above, there is no denying the facts he



performs, so there is no resolving how he performs it.

“I know the Southsayers<sup>18</sup> and diviners of the East, the wise men of thy country, and the magicians, of Persia, used a wand in all their performances of this nature; also we find in many ancient writings, that the Scythians, the Sarmatians, and the Thracians, and many other nations, used divinations and sorceries by twigs and rods, in the same or like manner as this Leontine does.

“The Goths also retained this custom; whether they received it from the ancient Scythians or not, I know not; but I find it crept in among the Huns, and perhaps marched round through those desolate parts of the world which are now called Muscovy, into Laponia, and the North, where nothing is more certain than that they raise storms and calms, and cause the winds to blow this way or that, as the mariners please or pay them, and that they do it by crossing little switches or wands in wild and irregular motions to those quarters from whence they will have it blow.

“This Rabbdomantic Art, or Divining by Rods, I thought had been dropt out of the world, but they assure me here, that when Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, made war in Germany, the Swedish soldiers would, with rods, find out the treasure which the monks hid in their churches and convents, in vaults and places under ground, where nothing but such an art could do it.

“For my part, I have so little faith in these things, that I cannot give the credit to it that others do;

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<sup>18</sup> Soothsayers: Defoe, relying upon a false etymology, often used “Southsayers” in his later books on occult subjects.

tho' at the same time I must confess I cannot detect any fallacy yet in it ; tho' sometimes, I begin to think there must be some legerdemain in it, which nobody could yet find out, but which would, in time, discover itself, as such things generally do. The rest I must leave to time. But I dare say thou wilt confess thou art outdone by this man, and perhaps will say it is impossible to be true, but for that there is no room for question ; because there is no argument against demonstration."

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Paris, 20th of the 4th Moon, of the Year 1693.

## CHAPTER X

A BUSY LIFE—1719-1724—ROBINSON CRUSOE

THE Defoe that is known to the modern reader is the Defoe of the five years, 1719-1724, the man who between his sixtieth year, and his sixty-fifth wrote the three parts of *Robinson Crusoe*, *The History of the Life and Adventures of Mr. Duncan Campbell*, *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, *The Life, Adventures, and Piracies of the Famous Captain Singleton*, *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders*, *A Journal of the Plague Year*, *The History and Remarkable Life of the Truly Honorable Colonel Jacque, Commonly Called Col. Jack*, *The Fortunate Mistress*, or, as the title is often given, *Roxana*, and *A New Voyage round the World*. Of these eleven volumes, all of fair length, only one, the third part of *Robinson Crusoe*, has more or less dropped out of sight; two—the first and second parts of *Robinson Crusoe*—have attained world-wide fame; the rest vary considerably in reputation and in the number of readers secured, but all of them save perhaps the last, have been warmly praised by admirers; at least one—*A Journal of the Plague Year*—has been generally accepted

as an English classic, one—*Captain Singleton*—has latterly been regarded by some readers as one of the best stories of adventure extant, and one—*Moll Flanders*—although eschewed by many persons on account of its coarseness, has been praised by competent critics, native and foreign, as a masterpiece of realistic fiction. This is a record which, when the advanced age of the writer and the quantity, quality and currency of his work are duly considered, it would be difficult to parallel.

It becomes still more astonishing when we are reminded that during these years Defoe's bibliography must be credited with at least six other volumes and with a continuation of a formerly published work almost equivalent in size to a new volume, that his journalistic labors, although diminished, remained considerable throughout the period, that he wrote at least a score of pamphlets, and probably as many more that have escaped detection or else cannot be unhesitatingly identified as his, and finally that it seems highly probable that he spent several of his summers taking horseback journeys in order to secure materials for his interesting and valuable *Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*, the first volume of which appeared in 1724. In the case of a man of his years, who, although he was plainly doing less work for the government, was steadily losing more and more time through the infirmities to which age is subject, this sudden up-

cropping and thorough exploitation, if we may so phrase it, of a new vein of genius, may be regarded as a phenomenon that is astounding, although perhaps not completely inexplicable. We have already noticed that the elements of which good fiction is composed had been, as it were, assembling themselves in his work; and we have observed furthermore that he had upon him the support and settling of a number of daughters. It is not unlikely that practice in what we may call semi-fiction, for example, the letters descriptive of a past generation written by his *Turkish Spy*—may have stimulated him to attempt a work of fiction pure and simple on a larger scale, and that he may have reckoned that more money would be made from successful books than from scattered pamphlets, and from a fresh line of production rather than from one already overworked.

However this may be, it is clear that, as soon as Defoe found that *Robinson Crusoe* was selling rapidly, he added to it a sequel, and then for four years supplied readers with the stories already enumerated, to say nothing of such cognate works as short lives of pirates and other criminals. His vein of fiction partly though not completely drying up, he then displayed an equally astonishing energy in supplying books of a miscellaneous character, topographical, occult, sociological, economic, and the like, while scarcely relaxing his energy as a

pamphleteer. In short, the twelve years between the appearance of *Robinson Crusoe*, in April, 1719, and the death of Defoe in April, 1731, may without exaggeration be regarded as one of the most remarkably fertile periods ever known in the biography of an aging man of genius. But it is time to turn to the masterpiece which is the chief subject of this chapter, and we may do this conveniently after we have summed up the little that is known of Defoe's life during the five years that saw him lay the basis for his enduring fame.

Throughout 1719 it is hard to distinguish the author of the two parts of *Robinson Crusoe*, which appeared in April and in August respectively, from the Defoe we have already learned in part to know. He attacked Bishop Hoadly once more; he compiled a *History of the Reign of King George*; he addressed a letter to his fellow dissenters with regard to the controversy over the Trinity then warmly waging; he wrote a biographical sketch of Baron de Goertz, "Privy-Counsellor, and Chief Minister of State, to the Late King of Sweden," he made a violent assault upon his old enemies, the stock jobbers of Exchange Alley; he gave, in his *Dumb Philosopher; or, Great-Britain's Wonder*, a truly "Surprizing Account how Dickory Cronke, a Tinner's Son in the County of Cornwall, was born Dumb, and continued so for 58 Years; and how some Days before he died, he came to his Speech;"



he described in *The King of Pirates* the enterprises of Captain Avery, the "Mock King of Madagascar;" he wrote tracts in the controversy between the manufacturers of woollens and the importers of calico, aiding the woollen men also by establishing a short-lived trade journal in their interest; and finally he founded another newspaper, the *Daily Post*. Meanwhile his squabbles with his fellow journalists did not cease, and he had a quarrel with a publisher named Cox over a pirated edition of *Robinson Crusoe*. Such energy needs no comment.

Equal energy was exhibited in 1720 in five volumes, the third part of *Robinson Crusoe*, *Duncan Campbell*, the continuation of the work on Charles XII of Sweden, *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, and *Captain Singleton*, but there was a decided falling off apparently in pamphleteering and in journalistic work proper. Yet a newspaper connection begun this year was of great importance in the development of his fiction. In July he began to contribute regularly to the *Original Weekly Journal*, published by John Applebee, and he continued to write for the paper until March, 1726. Applebee was the printer of the confessions and dying speeches made by criminals, and it is probably to Defoe's connection with him that we must attribute not only the fact that pamphlet sketches of malefactors like Jack Sheppard and Jonathan Wild form an interesting section of the

novelist's bibliography, but also the fact that his attention having been turned to the lives led by social outcasts, he was prompted to write those three great picaresque stories, *Moll Flanders*, *Col. Jack*, and *Roxana*. This transference of his services from *Mist* to *Applebee*, who was only a mild Tory, led to a cessation of the newspaper attacks that had so angered our hero during the past three years, but the break with *Mist* was not complete, for, as we have seen, Defoe seems to have visited the poor wretch in prison and occasionally wrote for his paper.

For the years 1720 and 1721, we must imagine Defoe as greatly interested in the financial catastrophe of the period, the collapse of the South Sea Bubble. He appears to have sold his own stock in good time, and it may be shrewdly surmised that he made money by writing not a few of the many pamphlets called forth by the crisis. Only three or four of his tracts on the subject can, however, be identified with any certainty, and 1721 is also singularly destitute of books to his credit. The latter fact is not surprising when we observe that 1722 is crowded with volumes, some of which must have been occupying his time during the preceding twelve-month. We know furthermore that during August, 1721, he was subjected to the unpleasant experience of seeing his somewhat ne'er-do-well son, Benjamin Norton Defoe, follow in the parental footsteps, and

by rash articles on the South Sea troubles printed in the *London Journal*, get himself into the hands of the law. Fortunately, the father's influence appears to have been able to save the son from serious punishment, but the elder man must have had occasion for somber reflections and misgivings.

It was on April 3, 1722, if we may take literally a statement made by him in the first volume of his *Tour*, that Defoe set out on the first of the systematic journeys designed to secure materials for that work. He probably made similar excursions during three or four successive summers; but, as he had already traveled over so much of England and Scotland that it would have been possible for him in large measure to compose his volumes on the basis of notes and recollections, we cannot be absolutely certain that the autobiographical statements he inserts in the pages of the *Tour* are thoroughly reliable. Probably they are; but possibly they are at times mere artistic embellishments. If we rely upon them, we must imagine our hero taking leisurely trips on horseback, keeping his eyes wide open for every indication of commercial prosperity, paying special attention to fine parks and mansions, drinking the waters at Epsom and Tunbridge Wells, and mingling good-humoredly with the crowds at races and fairs. He explores England and Wales and Scotland with great thoroughness and writes his descriptions and makes his shrewd comments in

the homeliest and clearest English. Of their useful kind few books are more interesting.

But it is his fiction that makes 1722 Defoe's *Annus Mirabilis*. *Moll Flanders*, *A Journal of the Plague Year*, and *Col. Jack* would of themselves constitute a fair basis for fame. But the year saw another excellent book upon the great pestilence, *Due Preparations for the Plague*, and it saw as well an extraordinarily popular manual, *Religious Courtship*, interesting to-day for the light it throws on the ideas and the manners of the prim middle classes of the times. As if these five volumes were not enough, Defoe also published within the year an elaborate account of the career of Peter the Great of Russia.

In 1723 he issued little, unless we accept, as we probably should do, several jocose and not very seemly pamphlets which discussed an absurd tract in which an estimable clergyman, the Reverend Dr. John Hancocke, advocated copious drinking of cold water as a panacea for fevers and other ailments. The early biographers could not bring themselves to believe that Defoe could have ever been indecorous; it is difficult for the close modern student of his works not to accuse him of having assumed several disguises in order to keep the controversy raging. In so far as his purpose was to make money, he should scarcely be censured with great severity; in so far as he aimed to discredit the quacks with which Lon-

don was swarming, he deserves high commendation. However this may be, we have evidence that Defoe's industry had at last placed him in fairly easy circumstances, for in 1723 he settled upon his daughter, Hannah, a leasehold estate near Colchester for which he paid, in two instalments, the sum of one thousand pounds. Unfortunately we must connect with this estate certain business transactions entered into by Defoe the next year with John Ward, a mercer of Coleshill in Warwickshire. These led later to a suit, details of which have only recently come to light. They are too complicated to be given here, but they seem to confirm what had before been surmised—that Defoe, for all his experience, could not resist in his old age those impulses to embark on new ventures in business that had led to bankruptcy early in his career. Whether he was as tricky as Ward appears to have claimed may be doubted, but it looks as if the latter were persuaded to rent the land ostensibly for agricultural purposes but really to set up a brick and tile works—Defoe's old employment—and that Hannah Defoe was kept in ignorance of the true nature of the transaction. Defoe seems not to have been able to start the works, and Ward's claim that his prospective partner feared to have his own wife and children know what he proposed to do is probably correct. A furtive, scheming, restless, ambitious man we must imagine the aging Defoe to have been,

yet all the while he was writing so much that it is difficult to understand how he could have found time for business speculations.

Early in 1724 appeared one of the most important of Defoe's works of fiction, *The Fortunate Mistress, or Roxana*; toward the close of the year, the less important and less read *New Voyage round the World*, which, however, is a narrative of some interest, since it gives an account of imaginary explorations in the lower parts of South America. The year was also marked, not only by the first of the three volumes of *A Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*, but also by one of the best of Defoe's contributions to what we call now-a-days Sociology, his readable book on the servant question, *The Great Law of Subordination Considered*, which, although in some respects quaint, reads for the most part as if it were the production of a contemporary author, so perennial are the problems with which it deals. To these books should be added a handful of tracts, two of them concerned with the famous malefactor John Sheppard, to whom, if Lee's view be correct, Defoe paid a special visit in Newgate. But now, having given, in outline, an account of Defoe's life for the five years during which he published most of his fiction, let us return to the book that has been the true basis for his fame.

The first part, *The Life and Strange Surprising*



*Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner,* was published on or about April 25, 1719, by William Taylor "at the Ship in Pater-Noster-Row," in an octavo volume adorned with a cut of the hero in his goat-skin clothes. A good copy of what is called the first issue, which is distinguished by the occurrence of a misprint in the short preface, now brings a high price. Taylor, according to tradition, accepted the manuscript after it had been vainly hawked about to other booksellers, and made his fortune by it. There is no doubt that at his death a few years later the publisher left a substantial estate; there is also no doubt that the book was exceptionally successful, since at least six authorized and three apparently unauthorized issues bear the date 1719. But the story that Defoe hawked his manuscript about seems to rest on a flimsy foundation, as Taylor had had a joint interest in several of his previous books, and only the year before had published his *Continuation of the Letters of a Turkish Spy*.

Nor is this the sole questionable story connected with the writing and publication of *Robinson Crusoe*. Several places and dates have been assigned for its composition, but there is little reason to believe that it was written anywhere save at Stoke Newington, or at any time other than a few months preceding its publication. As the germ of the book is to be found in the experiences of Alexander Sel-

kirk, the Scotch sailor, who spent a few solitary years on the island of Juan Fernandez, the makers of myths have not hesitated to affirm that Defoe made use of the papers of the returned sailor—who has not been shown to have had any—and cheated him into the bargain. A meeting with Selkirk has also been affirmed by some, and the house where the supposed conference took place has been pointed out in Bristol. A much more absurd report to the effect that the first part of the story was written by Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, while a prisoner in the Tower, and turned over to Defoe, who appropriated it as his own and subsequently added the second and third parts, was put in circulation toward the end of the eighteenth century. It has received credence from a few people who seem not to have taken the trouble to inquire whether the originators of the report had reliable sources of information, whether the relations Defoe had with Lord Oxford after 1714 were in any way friendly, whether Oxford could have written the book if he had tried, and whether he would have tried in view of the state of his health while a prisoner. It should be added that the notion that Defoe did not write his most famous story receives some support from those who affirm that *Robinson Crusoe* differs markedly from his other books, a proposition which, in view of the general ignorance with regard to Defoe and his works, may be very honestly maintained by

many, but which has thus far been countenanced by no competent student. Some students of Defoe have, however, as might have been expected, vied successfully with the ingenuous persons who discuss him without studying him, in promulgating bizarre notions about him and his greatest book. The most intrepid band of these students is composed of those who see in *Robinson Crusoe* an allegory of its author's life. It is true that Defoe himself, in the preface to the third part, does his best to make this notion prevail, and that we can see how some details of Robinson's life may be made to bear a vague allegorical resemblance to events in Defoe's career. But it seems probable that the allegorical character of the book was first suggested by the acrimonious critic Charles Gildon in a satirical tract of 1719, in which he made Robinson and Friday toss their mendacious creator in a blanket. Defoe, for some reason, chose the next year to take Gildon's suggestion seriously, with the result that he has puzzled and misled a few of the large number of people who exist for such exploitation.

What Defoe and some eccentric persons have thought about *Robinson Crusoe*—objection was taken to it in this country years ago because it did not reprehend slavery—is of less importance, however, than what the world has thought of it, which is somewhat easily determined. That it was the most lifelike and interesting story of adventure,

indeed the most readable fictitious prose narrative that had been written in English, was at once perceived by the public, as is shown by the number of reprintings speedily necessitated and by the abridgments soon issued. That it was a world story, not a merely national or racial one, was proved by the fact that both the parts issued in 1719 were in 1720 translated into French and German, and within the next two years into Dutch and Italian. A little over twenty years later they appeared in Danish, and since that time the book, in whole or in part, has been translated, not only into the chief European languages, but into Latin and ancient Greek and Hebrew, as well as into Arabic, Persian, and other tongues. Adaptations and abridgments and imitations have been very numerous; artists and publishers have vied with one another in producing beautiful editions; children of all ages and countries have been brought up on the wonderful story; when a new language is invented, *Robinson Crusoe* is one of the first books published in it—in short there is probably no other modern work that has attained so wide a circulation.

What is the source of this immense popularity? In endeavoring to answer this question we shall perhaps be led to apply to the great classic all the criticism it really needs at this late day. *Robinson Crusoe* can scarcely owe its immense popularity to its lifelike realism alone, although that is what all

the critics emphasize, for the reason that, although Defoe was a master of realistic description, he has had close rivals in that, who have nevertheless come far short of attaining his position as a world-writer. It cannot well be held that in substance and style the book as a whole is an artistic masterpiece of fiction, for neither in structure nor in characterization does it display exceptional power, and many of its pages do not rise in point of interest and value greatly above the average story of travel and adventure. This is certainly true of the second part, *The Farther Adventures*, and it is more or less true of the opening and closing pages of the first part, *The Strange and Surprising Adventures*. As for the moral essays that make up the third part, *The Serious Reflections*, few readers, if any, have felt impelled to praise them. What has given and what still gives *Robinson Crusoe* its place in literature is surely the island portion of the first part—the absorbing story of how a weak and solitary man struggles successfully with the pitiless and seemingly unconquerable forces of nature. This situation is so universal in its appeal that, when it is presented with Defoe's wealth of lifelike detail, and in his simple straightforward manner, it holds the attention of old and young. In describing the steps by which Robinson, undeterred by difficulties and mistakes, finally makes himself an abode in the midst of solitude and wild nature, Defoe's great in-

terest in agriculture, in the mechanic arts, in all that goes to make up the daily life of man, has full play, and he manages to impart much of his own interest to us. Like a skilful journalist he changes his immediate subject before he has tired his reader, and he makes a most skilful use of critical moments such as Robinson's discovery of the footprint on the sands. He nowhere endeavors to represent his hero as other than he really is, a rather ignorant adventurer of no very high character or exceptional endowments. An ordinary man in a situation that appeals extraordinarily to our sympathies, both man and situation set before us so vividly that we are continually asking ourselves, "Would I have thought of that expedient?" or saying "That is what I should have done"—such in its essence is *Robinson Crusoe*. Other men have described the life of a solitary, but none with such simple realistic power as Defoe displayed; other writers have perhaps rivaled him in this power, but none has been equally fortunate in securing a theme of such universal appeal. In the carrying power of the island portion of the story—the despair of the shipwrecked man, his utilizing the ship's stores, his slow building up of his home, his taming his goats, his dread of the cannibals, his rescue of Friday, his joy in the new human companionship—in all this, *Robinson Crusoe* makes an appeal comparable in its universality to that made by the great poems of the world. This



appeal enables us to put up with the somewhat excessive moralizing with which the narrowly pious non-conformist author endeavored, as his prefaces show us, to obviate the reproaches he and many of the readers of his time were wont to bestow upon literature, particularly drama and fiction, designed chiefly to please. Preach as he would, however, Defoe, as his later works clearly prove, could not help being interested in his own stories as stories, and we feel sure that he sympathized as we do with the fortunes and misfortunes of Robinson. His sympathetic interest, his homely style, his realistic power, his selection of a theme of universal validity and appeal, these features, taken in conjunction with the practice twenty years of journalism and miscellaneous writing had given him in narration and description, explain in part Defoe's sudden success in the field of fiction and the great importance of that success to all subsequent laborers in the same field. He is the real father of the English novel in the sense that he was the first Englishman to write a truly readable, widely circulated, and permanently valuable prose story dealing with secular human life. Selections from such a story are of course unnecessary, yet what would such a book as the present be if it did not contain a few pages from the acknowledged masterpiece of the writer with whom it deals? May the following pages at least call up pleasant memories of the reader's childhood.

*Robinson Escapes From the Current and Encounters His Parrot<sup>1</sup>*

"Having fitted my mast and sail, and tried the boat, I found she would sail very well. Then I made little lockers, or boxes, at either end of my boat, to put provisions, necessaries, and ammunition, &c. into, to be kept dry, either from rain, or the sprye of the sea; and a little long hollow place I cut in the inside of the boat, where I could lay my gun, making a flap to hang down over it to keep it dry.

"I fixed my umbrella also in a step at the stern, like a mast, to stand over my head, and keep the heat of the sun off of me, like an awning; and thus I every now and then took a little voyage upon the sea, but never went far out, nor far from the little creek; but at last, being eager to view the circumference of my little kingdom, I resolved upon my tour, and accordingly I victualled my ship for the voyage, putting in two dozen of my loaves (cakes I should rather call them) of barley bread, an earthen pot full of parched rice, a food I eat a great deal of, a little bottle of rum, half a goat, and powder and shot for killing more, and two large watch-coats, of those which, as I mentioned before, I had saved out of the seamen's chests; these I took, one to lie upon, and the other to cover me in the night.

"It was the sixth of November, in the sixth year

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<sup>1</sup> From "The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner: Who lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an un-inhabited Island on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonogue; Having been cast on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men perished but himself. With An Account how he was at last as strangely deliver'd by Pyrates. Written by Himself." 1719, pp. 161-169.

of my reign, or my captivity, which you please, that I set out on this voyage, and I found it much longer than I expected; for though the island itself was not very large, yet when I came to the east side of it, I found a great ledge of rocks lie out above two leagues into the sea, some above water, some under it; and beyond that a shoal of sand, lying dry half a league more, so that I was obliged to go a great way out to sea to double the point.

“When first I discovered them, I was going to give over my enterprise, and come back again, not knowing how far it might oblige me to go out to sea, and, above all, doubting how I should get back again; so I came to an anchor, for I had made me a kind of an anchor with a piece of a broken grappling, which I got out of the ship.

“Having secured my boat, I took my gun, and went on shore, climbing up upon a hill, which seemed to overlook that point, where I saw the full extent of it, and resolved to venture.

“In my viewing the sea from that hill where I stood, I perceived a strong, and, indeed, a most furious current, which run to the east, and even came close to the point; and I took the more notice of it, because I saw there might be some danger, that when I came into it, I might be carried out to sea by the strength of it, and not be able to make the island again; and indeed, had I not gotten first up upon this hill, I believe it would have been so; for there was the same current on the other side the island, only that it set off at a farther distance, and I saw there was a strong eddy under the shore; so I had nothing to do but to get in out of the first current, and I should presently be in an eddy.

"I lay here, however, two days ; because the wind, blowing pretty fresh at E. S. E. and that being just contrary to the said current, made a great breach of the sea upon the point ; so that it was not safe for me to keep too close to the shore for the breach, nor to go too far off because of the stream.

"The third day in the morning, the wind having abated over night, the sea was calm, and I ventured ; but I am a warning-piece again to all rash and ignorant pilots ; for no sooner was I come to the point, when even I was not my boat's length from the shore, but I found myself in a great depth of water, and a current like the sluice of a mill. It carried my boat along with it with such violence, that all I could do, could not keep her so much as on the edge of it ; but I found it hurried me farther and farther out from the eddy, which was on my left hand. There was no wind stirring to help me, and all I could do with my paddlers signified nothing ; and now I began to give myself over for lost ; for, as the current was on both sides the island, I knew in a few leagues' distance they must join again, and then I was irrecoverably gone, nor did I see any possibility of avoiding it ; so that I had no prospect before me but of perishing, not by the sea, for that was calm enough, but of starving for hunger. I had indeed found a tortoise on the shore, as big almost as I could lift, and had tossed it into the boat ; and I had a great jar of fresh water, that is to say, one of my earthen pots ; but what was all this to being driven into the vast ocean, where to be sure, there was no shore, no main land, or island, for a thousand leagues at least ?

"And now I saw how easy it was for the Provi-

dence of God to make the most miserable condition mankind could be in, worse. Now I looked back upon my desolate solitary island, as the most pleasant place in the world, and all the happiness my heart could wish for, was to be but there again. I stretched out my hands to it with eager wishes. ‘O happy desert,’ said I, ‘I shall never see thee more! O miserable creature,’ said I, ‘whether<sup>2</sup> am I going?’ Then I reproached myself with my unthankful temper, and how I had repined at my solitary condition, and now what would I give to be on shore there again! Thus we never see the true state of our condition, till it is illustrated to us by its contraries; nor know how to value what we enjoy, but by the want of it. It is scarce possible to imagine the consternation I was now in, being driven from my beloved island (for so it appeared to me now to be) into the wide ocean, almost two leagues, and in the utmost despair of ever recovering it again. However, I worked hard, till indeed my strength was almost exhausted, and kept my boat as much to the northward, that is, towards the side of the current which the eddy lay on, as possibly I could; when about noon, as the sun passed the meridian, I thought I felt a little breeze of wind in my face, springing up from the S. S. E. This cheered my heart a little, and especially when, in about half an hour more, it blew a pretty small gentle gale. By this time I was gotten at a frightful distance from the island, and had the least cloud or hazy weather intervened, I had been undone another way too; for I had no compass on board, and should never have known how to have steered towards the island, if

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<sup>2</sup> I. e., whither.

I had but once lost sight of it; but the weather continuing clear, I applied myself to get up my mast again, spread my sail, standing away to the north as much as possible, to get out of the current.

“Just as I had set my mast and sail, and the boat began to stretch away, I saw, even by the clearness of the water, some alteration of the current was near; for where the current was so strong, the water was foul; but perceiving the water clear, I found the current abate, and presently I found to the east, at about half a mile, a breach of the sea upon some rocks; these rocks I found caused the current to part again, and as the main stress of it ran away more southerly, leaving the rocks to the north-east, so the other returned by the repulse of the rocks, and made a strong eddy, which run back again to the north-west, with a very sharp stream.

“They who know what it is to have a reprieve brought to them upon the ladder, or to be rescued from thieves just a-going to murder them, or who have been in such-like extremities, may guess what my present surprise of joy was, and how gladly I put my boat into the stream of this eddy; and, the wind also freshening, how gladly I spread my sail to it, running cheerfully before the wind, and with a strong tide or eddy under foot.

“This eddy carried me about a league in my way back again, directly towards the island, but about two leagues more to the northward than the current which carried me away at first; so that when I came near the island, I found myself open to the northern shore of it, that is to say, the other end of the island, opposite to that which I went out from.

“When I had made something more than a league



of way, by the help of this current or eddy, I found it was spent, and served me no farther. However, I found that being between the two great currents, viz., that on the south side, which had hurried me away, and that on the north, which lay about a league on the other side; I say, between these two, in the wake of the island, I found the water at least still, and running no way; and having still a breeze of wind fair for me, I kept on steering directly for the island, though not making such fresh way as I did before.

“About four o’clock in the evening, being then within about a league of the island, I found the point of the rocks which occasioned this disaster, stretching out, as is described before, to the southward, and casting off the current more southwardly, had, of course, made another eddy to the north; and this I found very strong, but not directly setting the way my course lay, which was due west, but almost full north. However, having a fresh gale, I stretched across this eddy, slanting north-west, and in about an hour came within about a mile of the shore, where, it being smooth water, I soon got to land.

“When I was on shore, I fell on my knees and gave God thanks for my deliverance, resolving to lay aside all thoughts of my deliverance by my boat; and refreshing myself with such things as I had, I brought my boat close to the shore, in a little cove that I had spied under some trees, and laid me down to sleep, being quite spent with the labour and fatigue of the voyage.

“I was now at a great loss which way to get home with my boat. I had run so much hazard, and kne-

too much the case, to think of attempting it by the way I went out; and what might be at the other side (I mean the west side), I knew not, nor had I any mind to run any more ventures; so I only resolved in the morning to make my way westward along the shore, and to see if there was no creek, where I might lay up my frigate in safety, so as to have her again if I wanted her. In about three mile, or thereabouts, coasting the shore, I came to a very good inlet, or bay, about a mile over, which narrowed till it came to a very little rivulet or brook, where I found a very convenient harbour for my boat, and where she lay as if she had been in a little dock made on purpose for her. Here I put in, and having stowed my boat very safe, I went on shore to look about me and see where I was.

"I soon found I had but a little passed by the place where I had been before, when I travelled on foot to that shore; so taking nothing out of my boat, but my gun and my umbrella, for it was exceedingly hot, I began my march. The way was comfortable enough after such a voyage as I had been upon, and I reached my old bower in the evening, where I found everything standing as I left it; for I always kept it in good order, being, as I said before, my country house.

"I got over the fence, and laid me down in the shade to rest my limbs; for I was very weary, and fell asleep. But judge you, if you can, that read my story, what a surprise I must be in, when I was waked out of my sleep, by a voice calling me by my name several times, 'Robin, Robin, Robin Crusoe! poor Robin Crusoe! Where are you, Robin Crusoe? Where are you? Where have you been?'

"I was so dead asleep at first, being fatigued with rowing, or paddling, as it is called, the first part of the day, and with walking the latter part, that I did not wake thoroughly, but dozing, between sleeping and waking, thought I dreamed that somebody spoke to me. But as the voice continued to repeat 'Robin Crusoe! Robin Crusoe!' at last I began to wake more perfectly, and was at first dreadfully frightened, and started up in the utmost consternation. But no sooner were my eyes open, but I saw my Poll sitting on the top of the hedge, and immediately knew that it was he that spoke to me; for just in such bemoaning language I had used to talk to him, and teach him; and he had learned it so perfectly, that he would sit upon my finger, and lay his bill close to my face, and cry, 'Poor Robin Crusoe! Where are you? Where have you been? How come you here?' and such things as I had taught him.

"However, even though I knew it was the parrot, and that indeed it could be nobody else, it was a good while before I could compose myself. First, I was amazed how the creature got thither, and then how he should just keep about the place, and no where else. But as I was well satisfied it could be nobody but honest Poll, I got it over; and holding out my hand, and calling him by his name, 'Poll,' the sociable creature came to me, and sat upon my thumb, as he used to do, and continued talking to me, 'Poor Robin Crusoe!' and how did I come here, and where had I been, just as if he had been overjoyed to see me again; and so I carried him home along with me.

"I had now had enough of rambling to sea for

some time, and had enough to do for many days to sit still, and reflect upon the danger I had been in. I would have been very glad to have had my boat again on my side of the island; but I knew not how it was practicable to get it about. As to the east side of the island, which I had gone round, I knew well enough there was no venturing that way; my very heart would shrink, and my very blood run chill, but to think of it. And as to the other side of the island, I did not know how it might be there; but supposing the current ran with the same force against the shore at the east, as it passed by it on the other, I might run the same risk of being driven down the stream, and carried by the island, as I had been before, of being carried away from it; so with these thoughts I contented myself to be without any boat, though it had been the product of so many months' labour to make it, and of so many more to get it into the sea."

*Robinson Discovers the Footprint in the Sands<sup>3</sup>*

"You are to understand that now I had, as I may call it, two plantations in the island; one, my little fortification or tent, with the wall about it under the rock, with the cave behind me, which, by this time, I had enlarged into several apartments or caves, one within another. One of these, which was the driest and largest, and had a door out beyond my wall or fortification, that is to say, beyond where my wall joined to the rock, was all filled up with the large earthen pots, of which I have given an account, and with fourteen or fifteen great baskets,

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<sup>3</sup> From the same, pp. 179-185.

which would hold five or six bushels each, where I laid up my stores of provision, especially my corn, some in the ear cut off short from the straw, and the other rubbed out with my hand.

“As for my wall, made, as before, with long stakes or piles, those piles grew all like trees, and were by this time grown so big, and spread so very much, that there was not the least appearance to any one’s view, of any habitation behind them.

“Near this dwelling of mine, but a little farther within the land, and upon lower ground, lay my two pieces of corn-ground, which I kept duly cultivated and sowed, and which duly yielded me their harvest in its season; and whenever I had occasion for more corn, I had more land adjoining as fit as that.

“Besides this, I had my country-seat, and I had now a tolerable plantation there also; for, first, I had my little bower, as I called it, which I kept in repair; that is to say, I kept the hedge which circled it in, constantly fitted up to its usual height, the ladder standing always in the inside; I kept the trees, which at first were no more than my stakes, but were now grown very firm and tall; I kept them always so cut, that they might spread and grow thick and wild, and make the more agreeable shade, which they did effectually to my mind. In the middle of this I had my tent always standing, being a piece of a sail spread over poles set up for that purpose, and which never wanted any repair or renewing; and under this I had made me a squab or couch, with the skins of the creatures I had killed, and with other soft things, and a blanket laid on them, such as belonged to our sea-bedding, which I had saved, and a great watch-coat to cover me; and here, when-

ever I had occasion to be absent from my chief seat, I took up my country habitation.

“Adjoining to this, I had my enclosures for my cattle, that is to say, my goats. And as I had taken an inconceivable deal of pains to fence and enclose this ground, so I was so uneasy to see it kept entire, lest the goats should break through, that I never left off till with infinite labour I had stuck the outside of the hedge so full of small stakes, and so near to one another, that it was rather a pale than a hedge, and there was scarce room to put a hand through between them, which afterwards, when those stakes grew, as they all did in the next rainy season, made the enclosure strong like a wall, indeed stronger than any wall.

“This will testify for me that I was not idle, and that I spared no pains to bring to pass whatever appeared necessary for my comfortable support; for I considered the keeping up a breed of tame creatures thus at my hand, would be a living magazine of flesh, milk, butter, and cheese for me, as long as I lived in the place, if it were to be forty years; and that keeping them within my reach, depended entirely upon my perfecting my enclosures to such a degree, that I might be sure of keeping them together; which by this method indeed I so effectually secured, that when these little stakes began to grow, I had planted them so very thick I was forced to pull some of them up again.

“In this place also I had my grapes growing, which I principally depended on for my winter-store of raisins, and which I never failed to preserve very carefully, as the best and most agreeable dainty of my whole diet; and indeed they were not agreeable



only, but physical,<sup>4</sup> wholesome, nourishing, and refreshing to the last degree.

“As this was also about half way between my other habitation and the place where I had laid up my boat, I generally stayed, and lay here in my way thither, for I used frequently to visit my boat, and I kept all things about or belonging to her in very good order. Sometimes I went out in her to divert myself, but no more hazardous voyages would I go, nor scarce ever above a stone’s cast or two from the shore, I was so apprehensive of being hurried out of my knowledge again by the currents, or winds, or any other accident. But now I come to a new scene of my life.

“It happened one day about noon, going towards my boat, I was exceedingly surprised with the print of a man’s naked foot on the shore, which was very plain to be seen in the sand. I stood like one thunderstruck, or as if I had seen an apparition; I listened, I looked round me, I could hear nothing, nor see anything; I went up to a rising ground to look farther; I went up the shore and down the shore, but it was all one; I could see no other impression but that one; I went to it again to see if there were any more, and to observe if it might not be my fancy; but there was no room for that, for there was exactly the very print of a foot, toes, heel, and every part of a foot; how it came thither, I knew not, nor could in the least imagine. But after innumerable fluttering thoughts, like a man perfectly confused and out of myself, I came home to my fortification, not feeling, as we say, the ground I went on, but terrified to the last degree, looking

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<sup>4</sup> I. e., medicinal.

behind me at every two or three steps, mistaking every bush and tree, and fancying every stump at a distance to be a man; nor is it possible to describe how many various shapes an affrighted imagination represented things to me in; how many wild ideas were found every moment in my fancy, and what strange unaccountable whimsies came into my thoughts by the way.

“When I came to my castle, for so I think I called it ever after this, I fled into it like one pursued; whether I went over by the ladder, as first contrived, or went in at the hole in the rock, which I called a door, I cannot remember; no, nor could I remember the next morning; for never frightened hare fled to cover, or fox to earth, with more terror of mind than I to this retreat.

“I slept none that night. The farther I was from the occasion of my fright, the greater my apprehensions were; which is something contrary to the nature of such things, and especially to the usual practice of all creatures in fear. But I was so embarrassed with my own frightful ideas of the thing, that I formed nothing but dismal imaginations to myself, even though I was now a great way off of it. Sometimes I fancied it must be the Devil; and reason joined in with me upon this supposition. For how should any other thing in human shape come into the place? Where was the vessel that brought them? What marks were there of any other footsteps? And how was it possible a man should come there? But then to think that Satan should take human shape upon him in such a place, where there could be no manner of occasion for it, but to leave the print of his foot behind him, and that even for

no purpose too, for he could not be sure I should see it; this was an amusement<sup>5</sup> the other way; I considered that the Devil might have found out abundance of other ways to have terrified me than this of the single print of a foot. That as I lived quite on the other side of the island, he would never have been so simple to leave a mark in a place where 't was ten thousand to one whether I should ever see it or not, and in the sand too, which the first surge of the sea, upon a high wind, would have defaced entirely. All this seemed inconsistent with the thing itself, and with all the notions we usually entertain of the subtilty of the Devil.

“Abundance of such things as these assisted to argue me out of all apprehensions of its being the Devil. And I presently concluded then, that it must be some more dangerous creature; viz. that it must be some of the savages of the main land over against me, who had wandered out to sea in their canoes, and, either driven by the currents, or by contrary winds, had made the island; and had been on shore, but were gone away again to sea, being as loath, perhaps, to have stayed in this desolate island, as I would have been to have had them.

“While these reflections were rolling upon my mind, I was very thankful in my thoughts, that I was so happy as not to be thereabouts at that time, or that they did not see my boat, by which they would have concluded that some inhabitants had been in the place, and perhaps have searched farther for me. Then terrible thoughts racked my imagination about their having found my boat, and that there were people here; and that, if so, I should cer-

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<sup>5</sup> I. e., a cause of perplexity.

tainly have them come again in greater numbers and devour me; that if it should happen so that they should not find me, yet they would find my enclosure, destroy all my corn, carry away all my flock of tame goats, and I should perish at last for mere want.

“Thus my fear banished all my religious hope; all that former confidence in God which was founded upon such wonderful experience as I had had of his goodness, now vanished, as if he that had fed me by miracle hitherto, could not preserve by his power the provision which he had made for me by his goodness. I reproached myself with my easiness, that would not sow any more corn one year than would just serve me till the next season, as if no accident could intervene to prevent my enjoying the crop that was upon the ground; and this I thought so just a reproof, that I resolved for the future to have two or three years’ corn before-hand, so that whatever might come, I might not perish for want of bread.

“How strange a checker-work of Providence is the life of man! and by what secret differing springs are the affections hurried about as differing circumstances present! To-day we love what to-morrow we hate; to-day we seek what to-morrow we shun; to-day we desire what to-morrow we fear; nay, even tremble at the apprehensions of; this was exemplified in me at this time in the most lively manner imaginable; for I, whose only affliction was, that I seemed banished from human society, that I was alone, circumscribed by the boundless ocean, cut off from mankind, and condemned to what I called silent life; that I was as one who Heaven thought

not worthy to be numbered among the living, or to appear among the rest of his creatures; that to have seen one of my own species would have seemed to me a raising me from death to life, and the greatest blessing that Heaven itself, next to the supreme blessing of salvation, could bestow; I say, that I should now tremble at the very apprehensions of seeing a man, and was ready to sink into the ground at but the shadow or silent appearance of a man's having set his foot in the island."

*Will Atkins' Basket-House<sup>6</sup>*

"With the help of these tools, they were so very handy, that they came at last to build up their huts, or houses, very handsomely; raddling, or working it up like basket-work all the way round, which was a very extraordinary piece of ingenuity, and looked very odd, but was an exceeding good fence, as well against heat, as against all sorts of vermin; and our men were so taken with it, that they got the wild savages to come and do the like for them; so that when I came to see the two Englishmen's colonies, they looked, at a distance, as if they lived all, like bees in a hive; and as for W. Atkins, who was now become a very industrious, necessary, and sober fellow, he had made himself such a tent of basket-work, as I believe was never seen; it was 120 paces round in the outside, as I measured by my steps; the walls were as close worked as a basket, in pannels,

<sup>6</sup> From "The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe; Being the Second and Last Part of his Life, And of the Strange Surprising Accounts of his Travels Round three Parts of the Globe. Written by Himself." 1719, pp. 122-124. There are two issues of the first edition. The text follows the first of these.

or squares of 32 in number, and very strong, standing about 7 foot high; in the middle was another, not above 22 paces round, but built stronger, being eight-square in its form, and in the eight corners stood eight very strong posts, round the top of which he laid strong pieces pinned together with wooden pins, from which he raised a pyramid for a roof of eight rafters, very handsome, I assure you, and joined together very well, though he had no nails, and only a few iron spikes, which he made himself too, out of the old iron that I had left there; and, indeed, this fellow shewed abundance of ingenuity in several things which he had no knowledge of; he made him a forge, with a pair of wooden bellows to blow the fire; he made himself charcoal for his work, and he formed out of one of the iron crows, a middling good anvil to hammer upon; in this manner he made many things, but especially hooks, staples and spikes, bolts and hinges; but to return to the house, after he had pitched the roof of his innermost tent, he worked it up between the rafters with basket-work, so firm, and thatched that over again so ingeniously with rice-straw, and over that a large leaf of a tree, which covered the top, that his house was as dry as if it had been tiled or slated. Indeed he owned that the savages made the basket-work for him.

“The outer circuit was covered, as a lean-to, all round this inner apartment, and long rafters lay from the two and thirty angles to the top posts of the inner house, being about 20 foot distant; so that there was a space like a walk within the outer wicker-wall, and without the inner, near 20 foot wide.



"The inner-place he partitioned off with the same wicker-work, but much fairer, and divided it into six apartments, so that he had six rooms on a floor; and out of every one of these there was a door; first into the entry or coming into the main tent, and another door into the space, or walk, that was round it; so that walk was also divided into six equal parts, which served not only for retreat, but to store up any necessaries which the family had occasion for. These six spaces not taking up the whole circumference, what other apartments the outer circle had, were thus ordered. As soon as you were in at the door of the outer circle, you had a short passage straight before you to the door of the inner house, but on either side was a wicker partition, and a door in it, by which you went, first, into a large room or storehouse, 20 foot wide, and about 30 foot long, and through that into another not quite so long; so that in the outer circle was ten handsome rooms, six of which were only to be come at through the apartments of the inner tent, and served as closets or retiring rooms to the respective chambers of the inner circle, and four large warehouses, or barns, or what you please to call them, which went in through one another, two on either hand of the passage, that led through the outer door to the inner tent."

*A Truly Remarkable Story*<sup>7</sup>

"The soldiers<sup>8</sup> were ordered upon pain of death

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<sup>7</sup> From "Serious Reflections during the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe: with his Vision of the Angelick World. Written by Himself." 1720, pp. 222-224.

<sup>8</sup> These were English soldiers, who in one of the campaigns

not to stir from their camp, or to plunder any of the country people; the reason was evident, because provisions being somewhat scarce, if the boors<sup>9</sup> were not protected, they would have fled from their houses, and the army would have been put to great straits, being just entered into the enemies' country.

"It happened that five English soldiers straggling beyond their bounds were fallen upon, near a farmhouse, by some of the country people (for indeed the boors were oftentimes too unmerciful to the soldiers), as if they had plundered them, when indeed they had not. The soldiers defended themselves, got the better, and killed two of the boors; and being, as they thought, justly provoked by being first attacked, they broke into the house, and then used them roughly enough indeed.

"They found in the house a great quantity of apples, the people being fled had left them in possession, and they made no haste to go away, but fell to work with the apples; and heating the oven put a great quantity of apples into the oven to roast. In the meantime the boors, who knew their number to be but five, and had got more help on their side, came down upon them again, attacked the house, forced their way in, mastered the Englishmen, killed two, and took a third, and barbarously put him into the oven, which he had heated, where he was smothered to death; it seems it was not hot enough to burn him.

"The other two escaped, but in coming back to the camp, they were immediately apprehended by

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in Flanders had been ordered "to march into the flat Country towards Newport."

<sup>9</sup> The country people of Flanders.

the provosts, and brought to a court martial, where they were sentenced, not for plundering, for that did not appear, but for being out of the bounds appointed by the general order, as above.

“When the sentence came to be executed, the general was prevailed upon to spare one of them, and to order them to cast lots for their lives. This, as it is known, is usually done by throwing dice upon a drumhead; and he that throws highest or lowest, as is appointed before, is to die; at this time he that threw lowest was to live.

“When the fellows were brought out to throw, the first threw two sixes, and fell immediately to wringing his hands, crying he was a dead man; but was as much surprised with joy, when, his comrade throwing, there came up two sixes also.

“The officer appointed to see execution was a little doubtful what to do, but his orders being positive, he commanded them to throw again; they did so, and each of them threw two fives; the soldiers that stood round shouted, and said neither of them was to die. The officer, being a sober thinking man, said it was strange, and looked like something from Heaven, and he would not proceed without acquainting the council of war, which was then sitting; they considered awhile, and at last ordered them to take other dice and to throw again, which was done, and both the soldiers threw two fours.

“The officer goes back to the council of war, who were surprised very much, and looking on it as the voice of Heaven, respited the execution till the general was acquainted with it.

“The general sends for the men and examines them strictly, who telling him the whole story, he

pardoned them with this expression to those about him, 'I love,' says he, 'in such extraordinary cases, to listen to the Voice of Providence.'"<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The shocking incident of the smothering of the soldier in the oven was again made use of by Defoe eight years later in *The Memoirs of an English Officer*, which purported to be written by Captain George Carleton (1728). In the later version, however, Carleton states that he found the barbarously used body while he was taking a stroll from his quarters during the campaign of 1677, i. e., nearly twenty years earlier than the time at which the incident was laid in Robinson Crusoe's *Serious Reflections*. Carleton, as well as Robinson, was confirmed in "the Notions which the Generality, as well as I, had imbib'd of the private Barbarity of those People, whenever an Opportunity falls in their Way." (P. 32, ed. 1728.)

## CHAPTER XI

### OTHER WORKS OF FICTION—1720-1724

TWO pamphlets of 1719 mentioned in the preceding chapter, one giving an account of the exploits of Captain Avery the pirate, the other describing the Cornish prodigy Dickory Cronke, may from certain points of view be considered as belonging to Defoe's work in fiction for the year that saw the appearance of his masterpiece. The account of Cronke's wonderful recovery of his speech has obvious affiliations with Defoe's next work of importance, *The History of the Life and Adventures of Mr. Duncan Campbell, a Gentleman Who Tho' Deaf and Dumb, writes down any Stranger's Name at first Sight; with their future Contingencies of Fortune*, etc., which appeared about a year after the first part of *Robinson Crusoe*. This is a quaint and interesting rather than a great book, and, although full of the elements of fiction, it is a biography of a real charlatan rather than a story or novel. It displays that interest in Scottish "second sight" which Defoe had already shown in a series of pamphlets, and in its pages dealing with things

occult it looks forward to a group of books which will be mentioned in the next chapter. Whether Defoe wrote the *History* of the Scotch fortune-teller alone or in collaboration is a tangled point in his bibliography which cannot be discussed here, but it is certain that the book was designed as a "puff," or advertisement of an impostor and quack whose vogue among the credulous inhabitants of London was beginning to decline.

Some evolution in the art of writing fiction is seen in the volume that speedily followed in May, 1720, *Memoirs of a Cavalier; or, a Military Journal of the Wars in Germany, and the Wars in England*, for here we have Defoe's imagination working in the past rather than in strange regions of the life around him or in far-off islands and countries. It is not a highly poetic type of the imagination that he exhibits—his efforts at deception through the use of matter-of-fact details suggest the ideals and methods of a rather low form of art—but his work is genuine in certain important respects, since it represents the unaffected interest he had long displayed in the career of Gustavus Adolphus and in the English Civil War. He had read and thought much upon both subjects, and now in treating them in what purports to be the memoirs of a Cavalier who had seen service both in Germany and in his native land, he was enabled, with his gift, or trick of producing lifelikeness through realistic detail, to write



a book which has enthralled not a few readers, particularly those who enjoy military narratives. Apparently competent judges have declared that the descriptions of battles and of the movements of troops could have been written only by a trained soldier, and attempts have been made to show that the Cavalier was a real man, that Defoe merely edited a more or less contemporary manuscript account of service in the two great wars. But this manuscript has not come to light, the often vaunted historical accuracy of the so-called *Memoirs* has been shown to be a figment of the imagination, and the face of Defoe has been plainly descried peering over the Cavalier's shoulder. Curiously enough, the book fell rather flat when it first appeared; it was left for later readers to discover and, probably, to exaggerate its merits. The excessive zeal of some admirers ought not, however, to blind us to the fact that the *Memoirs of a Cavalier* marks a great artistic advance upon the *History of the Wars* of Charles XII of Sweden, which Defoe wrote in 1715, and to which he furnished a second and concluding part in this same year, 1720. It marks also a distinct development in the imagination of an aging man, who had previously been compelled as a journalist to occupy his mind chiefly with the immediate present.

A month later another excellent story of adventure was added to *Robinson Crusoe*, to wit, *The*

*Life, Adventures and Piracies of the Famous Captain Singleton.* This had much less success with contemporaries than the great book with which it has just been associated, but of late it has been ranked high among tales of its class. It has especially interested geographers, because Defoe, always a student of maps and books of travel, displayed in its pages an unusual knowledge of the center of Africa. It has pleased general readers because of its variety, for it is at once a treasure-trove story, a sea and pirate story, a travel story, a hunting story, a trading story. It is also, in part, a conversion, that is to say, a religious story, and in it, as in *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe displays what may be called democratic intuition, in his appreciation of the capabilities latent in the man of humble origin. Finally, the book interests students of Defoe's fiction because they perceive in one of the two chief personages, Quaker William, evidence that the novelist's powers of characterization were slowly developing through practice.

✓ These powers of characterization and the often emphasized gift for realistic presentation of life are seen at their height for Defoe in the chief story of 1722, *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders*. The full title is unquotable, and many of the incidents in the life of the prostitute and transported felon are so coarse and repulsive that the book has been shunned and its author de-

nounced by many sensitive readers. That Defoe intended the story of his heroine's fall and subsequent rehabilitation to be a salutary warning to young women of the unsheltered classes is, however, just as plain as the facts that in Moll herself he created a character truly alive, and that in his pictures of low life in England and of plantation life in Maryland and Virginia he showed himself to be as great a master of resolute realism as English literature can exhibit. It is not a book to be recommended to young readers—perhaps it is not a book to be recommended to any one, which is one of the reasons why no selections are given in the present volume from it or from *Roxana*—but as a story of life in the underworld, despite its invertebrate structure, it is a masterpiece, and it marks such an advance in Defoe's fiction as to cause one to ask whether he might not have given much more important lessons to his successors than he did, had he begun writing fiction at the age of forty or forty-five instead of when he was almost sixty.

The resolute realism of *Moll Flanders* becomes shortly afterwards the gruesome realism of *A Journal of the Plague Year*. Defoe may have somewhat exaggerated the horrors of the great pestilence, but one has only to compare his account of it, which has become a classic, with his book upon the *Storm* of nearly two decades before to see how the somewhat wooden compiler of a piece of journal-

ism has developed into a descriptive artist. Tributes to the intense if unpleasant power of the *Journal* are unnecessary. It is better to call attention to the facts that this book, like the *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, displays Defoe's ability to send his imagination back into the past, and that he has recreated that past so vividly that, as with the *Memoirs*, unsuccessful attempts have been made to establish the theory that he merely found and revised a contemporary manuscript. The student who is familiar with the whole range of Defoe's work, however, will wait until the manuscript is produced before occupying himself with this theory, and he will recommend the perusal of Defoe's less interesting but still readable companion volume on the same terrible visitation, *Due Preparations for the Plague, as well for Soul as Body*. This, as its title implies, is more specifically than the *Journal* a pious manual of conduct written in the anticipation that the plague then devastating Marseilles might extend to London. Moralist, journalist, and writer of fiction are inextricably mingled in these books and in the contemporary *Religious Courtship; Being Historical Discourses, on the Necessity of Marrying Religious Husbands and Wives only—With an Appendix of the Necessity of taking none but Religious Servants, and a Proposal for the better Managing of Servants*; but it is equally clear that in them we also discover traces of the former tradesman and projector as well as of

the sociologist, who is soon more or less to replace the novelist. "A very versatile and interesting personality," is not an extravagant judgment to pass upon such a writer. When we remember that he was also the author of *Robinson Crusoe* and of *Moll Flanders*, we are tempted to apply to him without qualification the great word "genius."

Of the remaining works of fiction to be dealt with in this chapter *Col. Jack*, of 1722, and *Roxana* and *A New Voyage round the World by a Course never sailed before*, of 1724, not a great deal need be said. The first hangs by *Moll Flanders* as a picture of low life in England, of plantation life in America, and of the life of reformation possible to fallen men and women. Except, however, for the early pages that describe the career of the little thief—vivid and pathetic pages which fully deserve the praise of Charles Lamb—the story of Col. Jack's matrimonial misadventures and of his successful dealings as a trader with the Spaniards in the West Indies and Mexico cannot compare in interest and in power of characterization with the masterly picaresque biography to which *Moll Flanders* gives her name. This is less true of *Roxana* because, while that courtesan is a less impressive character than Moll and has her adventures in an environment that gives Defoe less chance to paint vivid pictures of low life, she affords her creator, partly through her character and partly through her ad-

ventures, an opportunity to attempt a more complicated plot than he had introduced into any of his previous books. It is a far cry from the plot of *Roxana* to, let us say, the plot of Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White*, but it is to Defoe's credit that, after showing in *Robinson Crusoe* how a thoroughly readable and interesting narrative of life-like qualities could be composed, he should have given succeeding writers of fiction lessons in the art of carrying the imagination back into the past, lessons in the art of characterization, and finally one lesson in the art of evolving a complicated plot.

After *Roxana* did he feel himself too old and fatigued to profit in later works of fiction from the contributions he himself had made to the art? Probably he had no time to be self-conscious, even if he had the inclination. Perhaps his restless mind needed change, possibly his vein of fiction was drying up without his knowledge. All that it is safe to say is that *A New Voyage round the World* seems to be less interesting as a narrative of adventure, and to show fewer merits of characterization and plot than any of its predecessors. Yet it hangs by some of them as a story of trading and of geographical exploration, and its pages descriptive of adventures in Chile and Patagonia show some of the power of the master. They show also how wide of the mark those writers and readers are who



speak of Defoe as though he were nothing more than a bourgeois tradesman of considerable talents. Defoe never entirely shook off the tradesman—how could he have done so with so late a beginning as a writer?—but almost from the first, we find his imagination darting forth over the globe in search of new regions which English colonists can settle and English commerce conquer, darting with a sweep and a fervor which are as far as possible from suggesting the typical bourgeois mind, which suggest rather the spirit of those great Elizabethan adventurers for whom throughout his life our tradesman-author expressed a fervid admiration. It is this glowing imaginative faith in England's future empire that makes Defoe's last work of un-mixed fiction, *A New Voyage*, a fitting close to five years of phenomenal production.

From the enormous mass of the fiction thus briefly discussed we must, for various reasons, exclude, in making our selections, several important volumes, and those books from which we do take extracts necessarily suffer the fate of being most inadequately represented. Perhaps, however, the pages chosen will give some idea of Defoe's powers of varied description, and the quotation from *Colonel Jack* may bear witness to the fact that he had some command of pathos and a sympathy with children.

*Preparations for the Passage of the Lech* <sup>1</sup>

“The King being truly informed of the disposition of the Bavarian Army, was once of the mind to have left the banks of the Lech, have repassed the Danube, and so setting down before Ingolsta[d]t, the Duke’s capital city, by the taking that strong town to have made his entrance into Bavaria, and the conquest of such a fortress, one entire action; but the strength of the place, and the difficulty of maintaining his leaguer in an enemy’s country, while Tilly was so strong in the field, diverted him from that design; he therefore concluded that Tilly was first to be beaten out of the country, and then the siege of Ingolsta[d]t would be the easier.

“Whereupon the King resolved to go and view the situation of the enemy; his Majesty went out the 2d of April with a strong party of horse, which I had the honour to command; we marched as near as we could to the banks of the river, not to be too much exposed to the enemy’s cannon, and having gained a little height, where the whole course of the river might be seen, the King halted, and commanded to draw up. The King alighted, and calling me to him, examined every reach and turning of the river by his glass, but finding the river run along an almost straight course, he could find no place which

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<sup>1</sup> From “Memoirs of a Cavalier: or a Military Journal of the Wars in Germany, and The Wars in England; From the Year 1632, to the Year 1648. Written Threescore Years ago by an English Gentleman, who served first in the Army of Gustavus Adolphus, the glorious King of Sweden, till his Death; and after that, in the Royal Army of King Charles the First, from the Beginning of the Rebellion, to the End of that War.” 1720, pp. 100-103.

he liked, but at last turning himself north, and looking down the stream, he found the river, fetching a long reach, doubles short upon itself, making a round and very narrow point. 'There's a point will do our business,' says the King, 'and if the ground be good, I'll pass there, let Tilly do his worst.'

"He immediately ordered a small party of horse to view the ground, and to bring him word particularly how high the bank was on each side and at the point; 'and he shall have fifty dollars,' says the King, 'that will bring me word how deep the water is.' I asked his Majesty leave to let me go, which he would by no means allow of; but as the party was drawing out, a sergeant of dragoons told the King, if he pleased to let him go disguised as a boor, he would bring him an account of everything he desired. The King liked the motion well enough, and the fellow being very well acquainted with the country, puts on a ploughman's habit, and went away immediately with a long pole upon his shoulder; the horse lay all this while in the woods, and the King stood undiscerned by the enemy on the little hill aforesaid. The dragoon with his long pole comes down boldly to the bank of the river, and calling to the sentinels which Tilly had placed on the other bank, talked with them, asked them if they could not help him over the river, and pretended he wanted to come to them; at last being come to the point where, as I said, the river makes a short turn, he stands parleying with them a great while, and sometimes pretending to wade over, he puts his long pole into the water, then finding it pretty shallow he pulls off his hose and goes in,

still thrusting his pole in before him, till being gotten up to his middle, he could reach beyond him, where it was too deep, and so shaking his head, comes back again. The soldiers on the other side laughing at him, asked him if he could swim. He said 'No.' 'Why, you fool, you,' says one of the sentinels, 'the channel of the river is 20 foot deep.' 'How do you know that?' says the dragoon. 'Why, our engineer,' says he, 'measured it yesterday.' This was what he wanted, but not yet fully satisfied; 'Ay, but,' says he, 'may be it may not be very broad, and if one of you would wade in to meet me till I could reach you with my pole, I'd give him half a ducat to pull me over.' The innocent way of his discourse so deluded the soldiers, that one of them immediately strips and goes in up to the shoulders, and our dragoon goes in on his side to meet him; but the stream took the t'other soldier away, and he being a good swimmer, came swimming over to this side. The dragoon was then in a great deal of pain for fear of being discovered, and was once going to kill the fellow and make off; but at last resolved to carry on the humour, and having entertained the fellow with a tale of a tub, about the Swedes stealing his oats, the fellow, being a-cold, wanted to be gone, and he, as willing to be rid of him, pretended to be very sorry he could not get over the river, and so makes off.

"By this, however, he learned both the depth and breadth of the channel, the bottom and nature of both shores, and everything the King wanted to know; we could see him from the hill by our glasses very plain, and could see the soldier naked with him. Says the King, 'He will certainly be dis-

covered and knocked on the head from the other side. He is a fool,' says the King, 'he does not kill the fellow and run off;' but when the dragoon told his tale, the King was extremely well satisfied with him, gave him 100 dollars, and made him a quartermaster to a troop of cuirassiers.

"The King having farther examined the dragoon, he gave him a very distinct account of the shore and the ground on this side, which he found to be higher than the enemy's by 10 or 12 foot, and a hard gravel.

"Hereupon the King resolves to pass there, and in order to it gives, himself, particular directions for such a bridge as I believe never army passed a river on before nor since.

"His bridge was only loose plank laid upon large tressels in the same homely manner as I have seen bricklayers raise a low scaffold to build a brick wall; the tressels were made higher than one another to answer to the river as it become deeper or shallower, and was all framed and fitted before any appearance was made of attempting to pass.

"When all was ready the King brings his army down to the bank of the river, and plants his cannon as the enemy had done, some here and some there, to amuse<sup>2</sup> them.

"At night, April 4th, the King commanded about 2,000 men to march to the point, and to throw up a trench on either side, and quite round it with a battery of six pieces of cannon, at each end, besides three small mounts, one at the point and one of each side, which had each of them two pieces upon them. This work was begun so briskly, and so well

<sup>2</sup> I. e., to mislead.

carried on, the King firing all the night from the other parts of the river, that by daylight all the batteries at the new work were mounted, the trench lined with 2,000 musqueteers, and all the utensils of the bridge lay ready to be put together.”<sup>3</sup>

*Details of the March Across Africa<sup>4</sup>*

“In our return of this day’s journey, our men that made two days of it, met with a very surprising thing, that gave them some reason to be careful how they parted company again. The case was this. The second day in the morning, before they had gone half a mile, looking behind them, they saw a vast cloud of sand or dust rise in the air, as we see sometimes in the roads in summer, when it is very dusty, and a large drove of cattle are coming, only very much greater; and they could easily perceive that it came after them, and that it came on faster than they went from it. The cloud of sand was so great that they could not see what it was that raised it, and concluded that it was some army of enemies

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<sup>3</sup> The passage of the river was finally effected despite the desperate resistance of the Imperialists, whose great general, Tilly, received a wound of which he died soon after.

<sup>4</sup> From “The Life, Adventures, and Pyracies, of the Famous Captain Singleton: Containing an Account of his being set on Shore in the Island of Madagascar, his Settlement there, with a Description of the Place and Inhabitants: Of his Passage from thence, in a Paraguay, to the main Land of Africa, with an Account of the Customs and Manners of the People: His great Deliverances from the barbarous Natives and wild Beasts: Of his meeting with an Englishman, a Citizen of London, among the Indians, the great Riches he acquired, and his Voyage Home to England: As also Captain Singleton’s Return to Sea, with an Account of his many Adventures and Pyracies with the famous Captain Avery and others.” 1720, pp. 108-110.



that pursued them; but then considering that they came from the vast uninhabited wilderness, they knew it was impossible any nation or people that way should have intelligence of them, or of the way of their march. And therefore, if it was an army, it must be of such as they were, travelling that way by accident. On the other hand, as they knew that there were no horses in the country, and that they came on so fast, they concluded that it must be some vast collection of wild beasts, perhaps making to the hill country for food or water, and that they should be all devoured or trampled under foot by their multitude.

“Upon this thought, they very prudently observed which way the cloud seemed to point, and they turned a little out of their way to the North, supposing it might pass by them. When they were about a quarter of a mile, they halted to see what it might be. One of the negroes, a nimbler fellow than the rest, went back a little, and come again in a few minutes, running as fast as the heavy sand would allow, and by signs gave them to know that it was a great herd or drove, or whatever it might be called, of vast monstrous elephants.

“As it was a sight our men had never seen, they were desirous to see it, and yet a little uneasy at the danger, too; for tho’ an elephant is a heavy, unwieldy creature, yet in the deep sand, which was nothing at all to them, they marched at a great rate and would soon have tired our people, if they had had far to go, and had been pursued by them.

“Our gunner was with them and had a great mind to have gone close up to one of the outermost of them, and to have clapt his piece to his ear, and

to have fired into him, because he had been told no shot could penetrate them; but they all dissuaded him, lest upon the noise, they should all turn upon and pursue us; so he was reasoned out of it, and let them pass, which in our people's circumstance was certainly the right way.

"They were between twenty and thirty in number, but prodigious great ones; and tho' they often showed our men that they saw them, yet they did not turn out of their way, or take any other notice of them, than, as we might say, just to look at them. We that were before, saw the cloud of dust they raised, but we thought it had been our own caravan, and so took no notice; but as they bent their course one point of the compass, or thereabouts, to the southward of the east, and we went due east, they passed by us at some little distance, so that we did not see them or know anything of them till evening, when our men came to us, and gave us this account of them." . . .

"But<sup>5</sup> as we were refreshed with the neighbourhood of this lake of water, so we were now gotten among a prodigious number of ravenous inhabitants, the like whereof 'tis most certain the eye of man never saw. For as I firmly believe, that never man, nor a body of men, passed this desert since the flood, so I believe there is not the like collection of fierce, ravenous, and devouring creatures in the world; I mean, not in any particular place.

"For a day's journey before we came to this lake, and all the three days we were passing by it, and for six or seven days' march after it, the ground was scattered with elephants' teeth, in such a number as

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<sup>5</sup> From the same, pp. 113, 114.

is incredible; and as some of them may have lain there for some hundreds of years, so seeing the substance of them scarce ever decays, they may lie there for aught I know to the end of time. The size of some of them is, it seems, to those to whom I have reported it, as incredible as the number, and I can assure you, there were several so heavy as the strongest man among us could not lift. As to number, I question not but there are enough to load a thousand sail of the biggest ships in the world, by which I may be understood to mean, that the quantity is not to be conceived of; seeing that as they lasted in view for above eighty miles' travelling, so they might continue as far to the right hand, and to the left as far, and many times as far, for aught we knew; for it seems the number of elephants hereabouts is prodigious great. In one place in particular we saw the head of an elephant, with several teeth in it, but one the biggest that ever I saw. The flesh was consumed, to be sure, many hundred years before, and all the other bones; but three of our strongest men could not lift this skull and teeth. The great tooth, I believe, weighed at least 300 weight, and this was particularly remarkable to me, that I observed the whole skull was as good ivory as the teeth, and I believe all together weighed at least 600 weight, and tho' I do not know but, by the same rule, all the bones of the elephant may be ivory, yet I think there is this just objection against it from the example before me, that then all the other bones of this elephant would have been there as well as the head."

"We<sup>6</sup> rested ourselves here five days, during which

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<sup>6</sup> From the same, p. 115.

time we had abundance of pleasant adventures with the wild creatures, too many to relate. One of them was very particular, which was a chase between a she-lion, or lioness, and a large deer; and tho' the deer is naturally a very nimble creature, and she flew by us like the wind, having perhaps about 300 yards the start of the lion, yet we found the lion by her strength, and the goodness of her lungs, got ground of her. They passed by us within a quarter of a mile, and we had a view of them a great way, when having given them over, we were surprised about an hour after, to see them come thundering back again on the other side of us, and then the lion was within 30 or 40 yards of her, and both straining to the extremity of their speed, when the deer, coming to the lake, plunged into the water, and swam for her life as she had before run for it.

"The lioness plunged in after her, and swam a little way, but came back again; and when she was got upon the land, she set up the most hideous roar that ever I heard in my life, as if done in the rage of having lost her prey." . . .

"We<sup>7</sup> likewise killed two or three civet cats, but their flesh is the worst of carrion; we saw abundance of elephants at a distance, and observed that they always go in very good company, that is to say, abundance of them together, and always extended in a fair line of battle; and this, they say, is the way they defend themselves from their enemies; for if lions or tigers, wolves, or any creatures, attack them, they being drawn up in a line, sometimes reaching five or six miles in length, whatever comes in their way is sure to be trod under foot, or beaten

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<sup>7</sup> From the same, pp. 116, 117.

in pieces with their trunks, or lifted up in the air with their trunks; so that if a hundred lions or tigers were coming along, if they meet a line of elephants, they will always fly back till they see room to pass by to the right hand or to the left; and if they did not, it would be impossible for one of them to escape; for the elephant, tho' a heavy creature, is yet so dexterous, and nimble with his trunk that he will not fail to lift up the heaviest lion, or any other wild creature, and throw him up in the air quite over his back, and then trample him to death with his feet. We saw several lines of battle thus; we saw one so long that indeed there was no end of it to be seen, and, I believe, there might be 2,000 elephants in a row or line. They are not beasts of prey, but live upon the herbage of the field, as an ox does, and, it is said that, tho' they are so great a creature, yet that a smaller quantity of forage supplies one of them than will suffice a horse."

### *Incidents of the Great Plague<sup>8</sup>*

"As I went along Houndsditch one morning, about eight a-clock, there was a great noise; it is true, indeed, there was not much crowd, because people were not very free to gather together, or to stay long together when they were there, nor did I stay long there. But the outcry was loud enough to prompt my curiosity, and I called to one that

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<sup>8</sup> From "A Journal of the Plague Year: Being Observations or Memorials, Of the most Remarkable Occurrences, As well Publick as Private, Which happened in London During the last Great Visitation In 1665. Written by a Citizen who continued all the while in London. Never made publick before." 1722, pp. 58-62.

looked out of a window, and asked what was the matter.

“A watchman, it seems, had been employed to keep his post at the door of a house which was infected, or said to be infected, and was shut up; he had been there all night, for two nights together, as he told his story, and the day watchman had been there one day, and was now come to relieve him. All this while no noise had been heard in the house, no light had been seen; they called for nothing, sent him of no errands, which used to be the chief business of the watchman; neither had they given him any disturbance, as he said, from the Monday afternoon, when he heard great crying and screaming in the house, which, as he supposed, was occasioned by some of the family dying just at that time. It seems the night before, the dead-cart, as it was called, had been stopt there, and a servant-maid had been brought down to the door dead, and the buriers, or bearers, as they were called, put her into the cart, wrapped only in a green rug, and carried her away.

“The watchman had knocked at the door, it seems, when he heard that noise and crying, as above, and nobody answered, a great while, but at last one looked out and said with an angry quick tone, and yet a kind of crying voice, or a voice of one that was crying, ‘What d’ye want, that ye make such a knocking?’ He answered, ‘I am the watchman! how do you do? What is the matter?’ The person answered, ‘What is that to you? Stop the dead-cart.’ This it seems, was about one a-clock; soon after, as the fellow said, he stopped the dead-cart, and then knocked again, but nobody answered.



He continued knocking, and the bellman called out several times, 'Bring out your dead;' but nobody answered, till the man that drove the cart being called to other houses, would stay no longer, and drove away.

"The watchman knew not what to make of all this, so he let them alone, till the morning-man, or day-watchman, as they called him, came to relieve him. Giving him an account of the particulars, they knocked at the door a great while, but nobody answered; and they observed that the window, or casement, at which the person had looked out, who had answered before, continued open, being up two pair of stairs.

"Upon this the two men, to satisfy their curiosity, got a long ladder, and one of them went up to the window, and looked into the room, where he saw a woman lying dead upon the floor, in a dismal manner, having no clothes on her but her shift. But though he called aloud, and putting in his long staff, knocked hard on the floor, yet nobody stirred or answered; neither could he hear any noise in the house.

"He came down again, upon this, and acquainted his fellow, who went up also, and finding it just so, they resolved to acquaint either the lord mayor, or some other magistrate of it, but did not offer to go in at the window. The magistrate, it seems, upon the information of the two men, ordered the house to be broken open, a constable and other persons being appointed to be present, that nothing might be plundered; and accordingly it was so done, when nobody was found in the house but that young woman, who, having been infected, and past recov-

ery, the rest had left her to die by herself, and were every one gone, having found some way to delude the watchman, and get open the door; or get out at some back door, or over the tops of the houses, so that he knew nothing of it; and as to those cries and shrieks which he heard, it was supposed they were the passionate cries of the family at the bitter parting, which, to be sure, it was to them all, this being the sister to the mistress of the family. The man of the house, his wife, several children, and servants, being all gone and fled, whether sick or sound, that I could never learn; nor, indeed, did I make much enquiry after it.

“Many such escapes were made out of infected houses, as particularly, when the watchman was sent of some errand; for it was his business to go of any errand that the family sent him of, that is to say, for necessaries, such as food and physic, to fetch physicians, if they would come, or surgeons, or nurses, or to order the dead-cart, and the like; but with this condition, too, that when he went he was to lock up the outer door of the house, and take the key away with him; to evade this, and cheat the watchmen, people got two or three keys made to their locks, or they found ways to unscrew the locks, such as were screwed on, and so take off the lock, being in the inside of the house, and while they sent away the watchman to the market, to the bake-house, or for one trifle or another, open the door, and go out as often as they pleased. But this being found out, the officers afterwards had orders to padlock up the doors on the outside, and place bolts on them as they thought fit.

“At another house, as I was informed, in the

street next within Aldgate, a whole family was shut up and locked in, because the maid-servant was taken sick; the master of the house had complained by his friends to the next alderman, and to the lord mayor, and had consented to have the maid carried to the pesthouse, but was refused; so the door was marked with a red cross, a padlock on the outside, as above, and a watchman set to keep the door, according to public order.

“After the master of the house found there was no remedy, but that he, his wife, and his children were to be locked up with this poor distempered servant, he called to the watchman, and told him he must go then and fetch a nurse for them to attend this poor girl, for that it would be certain death to them all to oblige them to nurse her, and told him plainly that, if he would not do this, the maid must perish either of the distemper, or be starved for want of food, for he was resolved none of his family should go near her, and she lay in the garret, four story high, where she could not cry out, or call to anybody for help.

“The watchman consented to that, and went and fetched a nurse, as he was appointed, and brought her to them the same evening; during this interval, the master of the house took his opportunity to break a large hole through his shop into a bulk or stall, where formerly a cobbler had sat, before or under his shop window; but the tenant, as may be supposed, at such a dismal time as that, was dead or removed, and so he had the key in his own keeping; having made his way into this stall, which he could not have done, if the man had been at the door, the noise he was obliged to make being such as would

have alarmed the watchman; I say, having made his way into this stall, he sat still till the watchman returned with the nurse, and all the next day also; but the night following, having contrived to send the watchman of another trifling errand, which, as I take it, was to an apothecary's for a plaster for the maid, which he was to stay for the making up, or some other such errand, that might secure his staying some time; in that time he conveyed himself and all his family out of the house, and left the nurse and the watchman to bury the poor wench, that is, throw her into the cart, and take care of the house."

*The Pit of Aldgate*<sup>9</sup>

"I went all the first part of the time freely about the streets, tho' not so freely as to run myself into apparent danger, except when they dug the great pit in the church-yard of our parish of Aldgate<sup>10</sup>; a terrible pit it was, and I could not resist my curiosity to go and see it; as near as I may judge, it was about 40 foot in length, and about 15 or 16 foot broad; and at the time I first looked at it, about nine foot deep; but it was said, they dug it near 20 foot deep afterwards, in one part of it, till they could go no deeper for the water; for they had, it seems, dug several large pits before this, for tho' the Plague was long a-coming to our parish, yet when it did come, there was no parish<sup>11</sup> in or about London, where it raged with such violence as in the two parishes of Aldgate and Whitechapel.

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<sup>9</sup> From the same, pp. 71, 72.

<sup>10</sup> The original reads *Algate*.

<sup>11</sup> The original misprints *Parsh*.

“I say they had dug several pits in another ground, when the distemper began to spread in our parish, and especially when the dead-carts began to go about, which was not in our parish till the beginning of August. Into these pits they had put perhaps 50 or 60 bodies each, then they made larger holes, wherein they buried all that the cart brought in a week, which by the middle to the end of August, came to from 200 to 400 a week; and they could not well dig them larger, because of the order of the magistrates, confining them to leave no bodies within six foot of the surface; and the water coming on, at about 17 or 18 foot, they could not well, I say, put more in one pit; but now at the beginning of September, the Plague raging in a dreadful manner, and the number of burials in our parish increasing to more than was ever buried in one parish about London, of no larger extent, they ordered this dreadful gulph to be dug; for such it was rather than a pit.

“They had supposed this pit would have supplied them for a month or more, when they dug it, and some blamed the church-wardens for suffering such a frightful thing, telling them they were making preparations to bury the whole parish, and the like; but time made it appear, the church-wardens knew the condition of the parish better than they did; for the pit being finished the 4th of September, I think, they began to bury in it the 6th, and by the 20th,<sup>12</sup> which was just two weeks, they had thrown into it 1,114 bodies, when they were obliged to fill it up, the bodies being then come to lie within six foot of the surface. I doubt not but there may be

<sup>12</sup> The original, *by the 20.*

some ancient persons alive in the parish, who can justify the fact of this, and are able to show even in what part of the church-yard the pit lay, better than I can; the mark of it also was many years to be seen in the church-yard on the surface lying in length parallel with the passage which goes by the west wall of the church-yard, out of Houndsditch, and turns east again into Whitechapel, coming out near the three Nuns Inn."

*An Estimate of Deaths*<sup>13</sup>

"Indeed the work was not of a nature to allow them leisure to take an exact tale of the dead bodies, which were all huddled together in the dark into a pit; which pit, or trench, no man could come nigh, but at the utmost peril. I observed often that in the parishes of Aldgate, and Cripplegate, Whitechapel and Stepney, there was five, six, seven, and eight hundred in a week, in the bills; whereas, if we may believe the opinion of those that lived in the city, all the time, as well as I, there died sometimes 2,000 a week in those parishes; and I saw it under the hand of one, that made as strict an examination into that part as he could, that there really died an hundred thousand people of the Plague, in it that one year, whereas the Bills,<sup>14</sup> the Articles of the Plague, was but 68,590.

"If I may be allowed to give my opinion, by what I saw with my eyes, and heard from other people that were eye-witnesses, I do verily believe the same,

<sup>13</sup> From the same, pp. 116, 117.

<sup>14</sup> The Bills of Mortality. Defoe perhaps overestimates the deaths.



viz., that there died, at least, 100,000 of the Plague only, besides other distempers, and besides those which died in the fields, and highways, and secret places, out of the compass of the communication, as it was called, and who were not put down in the Bills, tho' they really belonged to the body of the inhabitants. It was known to us all, that abundance of poor, despairing creatures, who had the distemper upon them, and were grown stupid, or melancholy by their misery, as many were, wandered away into the fields and woods, and into secret uncouth places, almost anywhere to creep into a bush, or hedge, and *DIE*."

### *A Surprising Case*<sup>15</sup>

"A certain citizen who had lived safe, and untouched, till the month of September, when the weight of the distemper lay more in the city than it had done before, was mighty cheerful, and something too bold, as I think it was, in his talk of how secure he was, how cautious he had been, and how he had never come near any sick body. Says another citizen, a neighbour of his, to him one day, 'Do not be too confident, Mr. ——. It is hard to say who is sick and who is well; for we see men alive and well to outward appearance one hour, and dead the next.' 'That is true,' says the first man, for he was not a man presumptuously secure, but had escaped a long while, and men, as I said above, especially in the city,<sup>16</sup> began to be overeasiness upon that score. 'That is true,' says he, 'I do not think my-

<sup>15</sup> From the same, pp. 225, 226.

<sup>16</sup> In the city proper, not in the parishes adjacent.

self secure. But I hope I have not been in company with any person that there has been any danger in.' 'No!' says his neighbour, 'was not you at the Bull-head Tavern in Gracechurch Street with Mr. — the night before last?' 'Yes,' says the first, 'I was, but there was nobody there, that we had any reason to think dangerous.' Upon which his neighbour said no more, being unwilling to surprise him, but this made him more inquisitive, and as his neighbour appeared backward, he was the more impatient, and in a kind of warmth, says he aloud, 'Why he is not dead, is he?' Upon which his neighbour still was silent, but cast up his eyes, and said something to himself; at which the first citizen turned pale, and said no more but this, 'Then I am a dead man, too,' and went home immediately, and sent for a neighbouring apothecary to give him something preventive, for he had not yet found himself ill; but the apothecary, opening his breast,<sup>17</sup> fetched a sigh, and said no more but this, 'Look up to God;' and the man died in a few hours."

*The Little Thief Does Not Know What To Do  
With His Money*<sup>18</sup>

"Nothing could be more perplexing than this money<sup>19</sup> was to me all that night. I carried it in my

<sup>17</sup> I. e., he saw "the Tokens," really "gangreen Spots, or mortified Flesh in small Knobs as broad as a little silver Penny, and hard as a piece of Callous or Horn."

<sup>18</sup> From "The History And Remarkable Life Of the truly Honourable Col. Jacque, Commonly Call'd Col. Jack." 1723, pp. 27-34. (Really published at the end of 1722. The title is not given in full.)

<sup>19</sup> Jack's share gained in a pick-pocket exploit in which he did little more than look on.

hand a good while, for it was in gold, all but 14s; and that is to say, it was in four guineas, and that 14s. was more difficult to carry than the four guineas; at last I sat down, and pulled off one of my shoes, and put the four guineas into that; but after I had gone a while, my shoe hurt me so I could not go, so I was fain to sit down again, and take it out of my shoe, and carry it in my hand; then I found a dirty linen rag in the street, and I took that up, and wrapped it all together, and carried it in that a good way. I have often since heard people say, when they have been talking of money that they could not get in, 'I wish I had it in a foul clout.' In truth, I had mine in a foul clout; for it was foul, according to the letter of that saying, but it served me till I came to a convenient place, and then I sat down and washed the cloth in the kennel,<sup>20</sup> and so then put my money in again.

"Well, I carried it home with me to my lodging in the glass-house, and when I went to go to sleep, I knew not what to do with it; if I had let any of the black crew I was with know of it, I should have been smothered in the ashes for it, or robbed of it, or some trick or other put upon me for it; so I knew not what to do, but lay with it in my hand, and my hand in my bosom, but then sleep went from [my] eyes. O! the weight of human care! I, a poor beggar-boy, could not sleep as soon as I had but a little money to keep, who before that could have slept upon a heap of brick-bats, or stones, cinders, or anywhere, as sound as a rich man does on his down bed, and sounder too.

"Every now and then dropping asleep, I should

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<sup>20</sup> I. e., the gutter.

dream that my money was lost, and start like one frightened; then, finding it fast in my hand, try to go to sleep again, but could not for a long while, then drop and start again. At last a fancy came into my head that if I fell asleep, I should dream of the money, and talk of it in my sleep, and tell that I had money, which if I should do, and one of the rogues should hear me, they would pick it out of my bosom, and of my hand too, without waking me; and after that thought I could not sleep a wink more; so that I passed that night over in care and anxiety enough; and this, I may safely say, was the first night's rest that I lost by the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches.

"As soon as it was day, I got out of the hole we lay in, and rambled abroad into the fields, towards Stepney, and there I mused and considered what I should do with this money, and many a time I wished that I had not had it; for, after all my ruminating upon it, and what course I should take with it, or where I should put it, I could not hit upon any one thing, or any possible method to secure it, and it perplexed me so, that at last, as I said just now, I sat down and cried heartily.

"When my crying was over, the case was the same; I had the money still, and what to do with it I could not tell. At last it came into my head, that I would look out for some hole in a tree, and see to hide it there, till I should have occasion for it. Big with this discovery, as I then thought it, I began to look about me for a tree; but there were no trees in the fields about Stepney or Mile-End, that looked fit for my purpose; and if there were any that I began to look narrowly at, the fields were

so full of people, that they would see if I went to hide anything there, and I thought the people eyed me as it was, and that two men in particular followed me to see what I intended to do.

“This drove me farther off, and I crossed the road at Mile-End, and in the middle of the town went down a lane that goes away to the ‘Blind Beggars,’ at Bethnal-Green; when I came a little way in the lane, I found a footpath over the fields, and in those fields several trees for my turn, as I thought; at last, one tree had a little hole in it, pretty high out of my reach, and I climbed up the tree to get to it, and when I came there, I put my hand in, and found (as I thought) a place very fit, so I placed my treasure there, and was mighty well satisfied with it; but behold, putting my hand in again to lay it more commodiously, as I thought, of a sudden it slipped away from me, and I found the tree was hollow, and my little parcel was fallen in quite out of my reach, and how far it might go in, I knew not; so that, in a word, my money was quite gone, irrecoverably lost; there could be no room so much as to hope ever to see it again, for it was a vast great tree.

“As young as I was, I was now sensible what a fool I was before, that I could not think of ways to keep my money, but I must come thus far to throw it into a hole where I could not reach it. Well, I thrust my hand quite up to my elbow, but no bottom was to be found, or any end of the hole or cavity; I got a stick off of the tree, and thrust it in a great way, but all was one; then I cried, nay, I roared out, I was in such a passion; then I got down the tree again, then up again, and thrust in

my hand again till I scratched my arm and made it bleed, and cried all the while most violently. Then I began to think I had not so much as a half-penny of it left for a half-penny roll, and I was a-hungry, and then I cried again. Then I came away in despair, crying, and roaring like a little boy that had been whipped; then I went back again to the tree, and up the tree again, and thus I did several times.

“The last time I had gotten up the tree, I happened to come down not on the same side that I went up and came down before, but on the other side of the tree, and on the other side of the bank also; and, behold, the tree had a great open place in the side of it close to the ground, as old hollow trees often have; and looking into the open place, to my inexpressible joy, there lay my money and my linen rag, all wrapped up just as I had put it into the hole. For the tree being hollow all the way up, there had been some moss or light stuff, which I had not judgment enough to know was not firm, and had given way when it came to drop out of my hand, and so it had slipped quite down at once.

“I was but a child, and I rejoiced like a child, for I hollow’d quite out aloud when I saw it; then I run to it, snatched it up, hugged and kissed the dirty rag a hundred times; then danced and jumped about, run from one end of the field to the other, and, in short, I knew not what, much less do I know now what I did, though I shall never forget the thing, either what a sinking grief it was to my heart when I thought I had lost it, or what a flood of joy o’erwhelmed me when I had got it again.

“While I was in the first transport of my joy, as I have said, I run about and knew not what I



did; but when that was over, I sat down, opened the foul clout the money was in, looked at it, told it, found it was all there, and then I fell a-crying as savourly as I did before, when I thought I had lost it.

“It would tire the reader should I dwell on all the little boyish tricks that I played in the ecstasy of my joy and satisfaction, when I had found my money; so I break off here. Joy is as extravagant as grief, and since I have been a man, I have often thought, that had such a thing befallen a man, so to have lost all he had, and not have a bit of bread to eat, and then so strangely to find it again, after having given it so effectually over—I say, had it been so with a man, it might have hazarded his using some violence upon himself.

“Well, I came away with my money, and having taken sixpence out of it, before I made it up again, I went to a chandler’s shop in Mile-End, and bought a half-penny roll and a half-pennyworth of cheese, and sat down at the door after I bought it, and eat<sup>21</sup> it very heartily, and begged some beer to drink with it, which the good woman gave me very freely.

“Away I went then for the town to see if I could find any of my companions, and resolved I would try no more hollow trees for my treasure. As I came along Whitechapel, I came by a broker’s shop, over against the church, where they sold old clothes, for I had nothing on but the worst of rags; so I stopped at the shop, and stood looking at the clothes which hunged at the door.

“‘Well, young gentleman,’ says a man that stood at the door, ‘you look wishly; do you see anything

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<sup>21</sup> Defoe often uses this form of the preterite.

you like, and will your pocket compass a good coat now, for you look as if you belonged to the ragged regiment?' I was affronted at the fellow. 'What's that to you,' said I, 'how ragged I am? If I had seen anything I liked, I have money to pay for it; but I can go where I shan't be huffed at for looking.'

"While I said thus, pretty boldly to the fellow, comes a woman out. 'What ails you,' says she to the man, 'to bully away our customers so? A poor boy's money is as good as my lord mayor's; if poor people did not buy old clothes, what would become of our business?' and then, turning to me, 'Come hither, child,' says she, 'if thou hast a mind to anything I have, you shan't be hectored by him; the boy is a pretty boy, I assure you,' says she, to another woman that was by this time come to her. 'Aye,' says the t'other, 'so he is, a very well-looking child if he was clean and well dressed, and may be as good a gentleman's son for anything we know, as any of those that are well dressed. Come, my dear,' says she, 'tell me what is it you would have?' She pleased me mightily to hear her talk of my being a gentleman's son, and it brought former things to mind; but when she talked of my being not clean, and in rags, then I cried.

"She pressed me to tell her if I saw anything that I wanted; I told her no, all the clothes I saw there were too big for me. 'Come, child,' says she, 'I have two things here that will fit you, and I am sure you want them both; that is, first, a little hat, and there,' says she, tossing it to me, 'I'll give you that for nothing; and here is a good warm pair of breeches; I dare say,' says she, 'they will fit you;

and they are very tight, and good; and,' says she, 'if you should ever come to have so much money that you don't know what to do with it, here are excellent good pockets,' says she, 'and a little fob to put your gold in, or your watch in, when you get it.'

"It struck me with a strange kind of joy that I should have a place to put my money in, and need not go to hide it again in a hollow tree; that I was ready to snatch the breeches out of her hands, and wondered that I should be such a fool never to think of buying me a pair of breeches before, that I might have a pocket to put my money in, and not carry it about two days together in my hand, and in my shoe, and I knew not how; so, in a word, I gave her two shillings for the breeches, and went over into the church-yard, and put them on, put my money into my new pockets, and was as pleased as a prince is with his coach and six horses; I thanked the good woman too for the hat, and told her I would come again when I got more money, and buy some other things I wanted; and so I came away."

*Col. Jack, As Overseer On a Plantation, Tries to Treat His Slaves Humanely*<sup>22</sup>

"I was elevated to the highest degree in my thoughts at this advancement,<sup>23</sup> and it is impossible for me to express the joy of my mind upon this occasion; but there came a difficulty upon me, that shocked me so violently, and went so against my very nature, that I really had almost forfeited my

<sup>22</sup> From the same, pp. 162-164.

<sup>23</sup> To the post of overseer. He had been kidnaped and carried to Virginia, where he was sold to a rich planter, who helped him to get to his feet. Later he became a prosperous planter himself.

place about it, and in all appearance, the favour of our master, who had been so generous to me; and this was, that when I entered upon my office, I had a horse given me, and a long horsewhip, like what we call in England a hunting-whip; the horse was to ride up and down all over the plantation, to see the servants and negroes did their work, and, the plantation being so large, it could not be done on foot, at least so often, and so effectually as was required; and the horsewhip was given me to correct and lash the slaves and servants, when they proved negligent or quarrelsome, or in short were guilty of any offence. This part turned the very blood within my veins, and I could not think of it with any temper, that I, who was but yesterday a servant or slave like them, and under the authority of the same lash, should lift up my hand to the cruel work, which was my terror but the day before. This, I say, I could not do; insomuch that the negroes perceived it, and I had soon so much contempt upon my authority, that we were all in disorder.

“The ingratitude of their return for the compassion I showed them, provoked me, I confess, and a little hardened my heart, and I began with the negroes, two of whom I was obliged to correct; and I thought I did it most cruelly; but after I had lashed them till every blow I struck them hurt myself, and I was ready to faint at the work, the rogues laughed at me, and one of them had the impudence to say behind my back, that if he had the whipping of me, he would show me better how to whip a negro.

“Well, however, I had no power to do it in such

a barbarous manner, as I found it was necessary to have it done; and the defect began to be a detriment to our master's business, and now I began indeed to see, that the cruelty, so much talked of, used in Virginia and Barbadoes, and other colonies, in whipping the negro slaves, was not so much owing to the tyranny, and passion, and cruelty of the English, as had been reported; the English not being accounted to be of a cruel disposition, and really are not so. But that it is owing to the brutality, and obstinate temper of the negroes, who cannot be managed by kindness and courtesy; but must be ruled with a rod of iron, beaten with scorpions, as the Scripture calls it; and must be used as they do use them, or they would rise and murder all their masters; which, their numbers considered, would not be hard for them to do, if they had arms and ammunition suitable to the rage and cruelty of their nature.

“But I began to see at the same time, that this brutal temper of the negroes was not rightly managed; that they did not take the best course with them, to make them sensible, either of mercy or punishment; and it was evident to me, that even the worst of those tempers might be brought to a compliance, without the lash, or at least without so much of it, as they generally inflicted.”

*The Success of His Experiment*<sup>24</sup>

“Here I am to observe in the general, to avoid dwelling too long upon a story, that as the two negroes who I delivered from punishment, were ever after the most diligent and laborious poor fellows in

<sup>24</sup> From the same, pp. 190-192.

the whole plantation as above, except Mouchat,<sup>25</sup> of whom I shall speak more by and by, so they not only were grateful themselves for their good usage,<sup>26</sup> but they influenced the whole plantation. So that the gentle usage and lenity, with which they had been treated, had a thousand times more influence upon them, to make them diligent, than all the blows and kicks, whippings, and other tortures could have, which they had been used to, and now the plantation was famous for it; so that several other planters began to do the same, tho' I cannot say it was with the same success; which might be for want of taking pains with them, and working upon their passions in a right manner. It<sup>27</sup> appeared that negroes were to be reasoned into things as well as other people, and it was by thus managing their reason, that most of the work was done.

"However (as it was), the plantations in Maryland<sup>28</sup> were the better for this undertaking, and they are to this day less cruel and barbarous to their negroes, than they are in Barbadoes and Jamaica; and 'tis observed the negroes are not in these colonies so desperate, neither do they so often run away, or so often plot mischief against their master, as they do in those.

"I have dwelt the longer upon it, that, if possible, posterity might be persuaded to try gentler methods with those miserable creatures, and to use them with humanity; assuring them, that if they did so,

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<sup>25</sup> A slave who showed special gratitude and capacity to be of service.

<sup>26</sup> The original, *usage*, both here and below.

<sup>27</sup> Not a new sentence in the original.

<sup>28</sup> One infers that Jack's master had plantations on the Potomac both in Virginia and in Maryland.



adding the common prudence that every particular case would direct them to for itself, the negroes would do their work faithfully and cheerfully; they would not find any of that refractoriness and sullenness in their temper, that they pretend now to complain of, but they would be the same as their Christian servants, except that they would be the more thankful and humble, and laborious of the two.

"I continued in this station between five and six year after this, and in all that time we had not one negro whipped, except as I observed before, now and then an unlucky boy, and that only for trifles; I cannot say but we had some ill-natured, ungovernable negroes; but if at any time such offended, they were pardoned the first time, in the manner as above; and the second time were ordered to be turned out of the plantation; and this was remarkable, that they would torment themselves at the apprehensions of being turned away, more by a great deal, than if they had been to be whipped, for then they were only sullen, and heavy; nay, at length we found the fear of being turned out of the plantation, had as much effect to reform them, *that is to say*, make them more diligent, than any torture would have done; and the reason was evident, namely, because in our plantation they were used like men, in the other like dogs."

*A Trading Visit to the Philippines*<sup>29</sup>

"When we came hither, [i. e. to Manila] we sa-

<sup>29</sup> From "A New Voyage round the World, by a Course never sailed before. Being a Voyage undertaken by some Merchants, who afterwards proposed the Setting up an East-India Company in Flanders." 1725 (Part I), pp. 102-104. The book really appeared in 1724.

luted the Spanish flag, and came to an anchor, carrying French colours.<sup>30</sup> Captain Merlotte, who now acted as commander, sends his boat on shore the next day to the Governor, with a letter in French very respectful; and telling the Governor that having the King of France's commission, and being come into those seas, he hoped that for the friendship which was between their Most Christian and Catholic Majesties, he should be allowed the freedom of commerce, and the use of the port; the like having been granted to his Most Christian Majesty's subjects<sup>31</sup> in all the ports of New Spain, as well in the southern as in the northern seas.

"The Spanish Governor returned a very civil and obliging answer, and immediately granted us to buy what provisions we pleased for our supply, or anything else for our use; but answered that, as for allowing any exchange of merchandizes, or giving leave for European goods to be brought on shore there, that he was not empowered to grant.

"We made as if this answer was satisfactory enough to us; and the next morning Captain Merlotte sent his boat on shore with all French sailors, and a midshipman French, with a handsome present to the Governor; consisting of some bottles of French wine, some brandy, two pieces of fine Holland, two pieces of English black baize, one piece of fine French drugget, and five yards of scarlet woollen cloth.

"This was too<sup>32</sup> considerable a present for a Span-

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<sup>30</sup> The trading voyage was, however, an enterprise of a group of British merchants.

<sup>31</sup> The French.

<sup>32</sup> In the original *two*.

iard to refuse; and yet these were all European goods, which he seemed not to allow to come on shore. The Governor let the Captain know that he accepted his present; and the men who brought it were very handsomely entertained by the Governor's order, and had every one a small piece of gold; and the officer who went at their head, had five pieces of gold given him. What coin it was I could not tell, but I think it was a Japan coin, and the value something less than a pistole.

"The next day the Governor sent a gentleman with a large boat, and in it a present to our Captain; containing two cows, ten sheep or goats rather, for they were between both; a vast number of fowls of several sorts, and twelve great boxes of sweetmeats and conserves, which were indeed very valuable; and invited the Captain and any of his attendants on shore, offering to send hostages on board for our safe return; and concluding with his word of honour for our safety, and free going back to our ships.

"The Captain received the present with very great respect, and indeed it was a very noble present; for at the same time a boat was sent to both the other ships with provisions and sweetmeats, in proportion to the bigness of the vessels. Our Captain caused the gentleman who came with this present to have a fine piece of crimson English cloth given him sufficient to make a waistcoat and breeches of their fashion, with a very good hat, two pair of silk stockings, and two pair of gloves; and all his people had a piece of drugget given them sufficient to make them the like suit of clothes; the persons who went to the other ship, and to the brigantine, had presents in proportion.

"This, in short, was neither more or less than trading and bartering, tho' for the grimace of it, we were in a manner, denied."<sup>33</sup>

*A Wonderful Spectacle in the Andes*<sup>34</sup>

"After supper my patron<sup>35</sup> turns to me, 'Come, Seignior,' said he, 'pray prepare yourself to take a walk.' 'What, in the dark,' said I, 'in such a country as this?' 'No, no,' says he, 'it is never dark here; you are now come to the country of everlasting day; what think you? Is not this Elysium?' 'I do not understand you,' says I. 'But you will presently,' says he, 'when I shall show you that 'tis now lighter abroad than when we came in.' Soon after this, some of the servants opened the door that went into the next room, and the door of that room, which opened into the air, stood open, from whence a light of fire shone into the outer room, and so farther into ours. 'What are they burning there?' says I to my patron. 'You will see presently,' says he; adding, 'I hope you will not be surprised.' So he led me out to that door.

"But who can express the thoughts of a man's

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<sup>33</sup> The Captain visits the Governor and is received in state. They reach an understanding that "tho' the Governor could not admit an open avowed trade, yet that the merchants would not be forbid coming on board our ship, and trading with us in such manner as we should be very well satisfied with; after which, we should be at no hazard of getting the goods we should sell, put on shore." On this basis the visitors carry on a thriving trade, and then proceed upon their voyage. One is frequently reminded of Colonel Jack's trading with the Cubans and Mexicans.

<sup>34</sup> From the same, Part II, pp. 99-103.

<sup>35</sup> A Chilian gentleman who had been hospitable to the unnamed hero of *A New Voyage*.

heart coming on a sudden into a place where the whole world seemed to be of a light fire, the valley was on one side so exceeding bright, the eye could scarce bear to look at it; the sides of the mountains were shining like the fire itself; the flame from the top of the mountain on the other side casting its light directly upon them, from thence the reflection into other parts looked red, and more terrible; for the first was white and clear, like the light of the sun; but the other being, as it were, a reflection of light mixed with some darker cavities, represented the fire of a furnace; and, in short, it might well be said, here was no darkness. But, certainly, at the first view it gives no traveller any other idea than that of being at the very entrance into eternal horror.

“All this while there was no fire, that is to say, no real flame, to be seen, only, that where the flame was, it shone clearly into the valley; but the volcano or volcanoes, from whence the fire issued out (for it seems there were no less than three of them, tho’ at the distance of some miles from one another) were on the south and east sides of the valley, which was so much on that side where we were, that we could see nothing but the light, neither on the other side, could they see any more, it seems, than just the top of the flame; not knowing anything of the places from whence it issued out, which no mortal creature, no, not of the Chilians themselves, were ever hardy enough to go near; nor would it be possible if any should attempt it, the tops of the hills, for many leagues about them, being covered with new mountains of ashes and stones, which are daily cast out of the mouths of those volcanoes,

by which, they grew every day higher than they were before, and which would overwhelm not only men, but whole armies of men, if they should venture to come near them.

“When first we came into the long narrow way I mentioned last, I observed, that, as I thought, the wind blew very hard aloft among the hills, and that it made a noise like thunder, which I thought nothing of, but as a thing usual; but now, when I came to this terrible sight, and that I heard the same thunder, and yet found the air calm and quiet, I soon understood, that it was a continued thunder, occasioned by the roaring of the fire in the bowels of the mountains.

“It was some time, you may suppose, before a traveller, unacquainted with such things, could make them familiar to him; and though the horror and surprise might abate, after proper reflections on the nature and reason of the thing, yet I had a kind of astonishment upon me for a great while; every different place to which I turned my eye, presented me with a new scene of horror; I was, for a while, frightened at the fire being as it were, over my head, for I could see nothing of it; but that the air looked as if it were all on fire, and I could not persuade myself but it would cast down the rocks and mountains on my head; but they laughed me out of that part.

“After a while, I asked them, if these volcanoes did not cast out a kind of liquid fire, as I had seen an account of on the monstrous eruptions at Mount *Ætna*, which cast out a prodigious stream of fire, and ran eight leagues into the sea. Upon my putting this question to my patron, he asked the Chilian,



how long ago it was since such a stream, calling it by a name of their own, ran fire. He answered it ran now, and if we were disposed to walk but three furlongs, we should see it.

“He said little to me, but asked me, if I cared to walk a little way by this kind of light. I told him, it was a surprising place we were in, but I supposed he would lead me into no danger; he said, he would assure me he would lead me into no danger; that these things were very familiar to them; but that I might depend there was no hazard, and that the flames which gave all this light, were six or seven miles off, and some of them more. We walked along the plain of the valley about half a mile, when another great valley opened to the right, and gave us a more dreadful prospect than any we had seen before; for at the farther end of this second valley, but at the distance of about three miles from where we stood, we saw a livid stream of fire come running down the sides of the mountain for near three quarters of a mile in length, running like melted metal into a mould, or out of a furnace, ’till I supposed, as it came nearer the bottom, it cooled and separated, and so went out of itself.

“Beyond this, over the summit of a prodigious mountain, we could see the tops of the clear flame of a volcano, a dreadful one, no doubt, could we have seen it all; and from the mouth of which, it was supposed, this stream of fire came, though the Chilian assured us, that the fire itself was eight leagues off, and that the liquid fire which we saw, came out of the side of the mountain, and was two leagues off of the great volcano itself, running like metal out of a furnace.

“They told me, there was a great deal of melted gold ran down with the other inflamed earth in that stream, and that much gold was afterwards found there; but this I was to take upon trust.”

## CHAPTER XII

### THE MISCELLANEOUS WORKS—1725-1728

AS we have seen, the Defoe of the closing years is primarily a miscellaneous writer of great versatility and almost marvelous fecundity. One might fairly hold that, in a sense, nothing in his life became him like the leaving it, for had he not set men old and young an example of energy, resourcefulness, and remarkable achievement practically unparalleled in the annals of literature? Yet the example has had little effect, since scarcely a single book or pamphlet of his closing years is widely read, and since only a few, such as *The Complete English Tradesman* and *The Political History of the Devil*, have obtained even a fair amount of currency. Adequately to describe the various phases of his activity would require a volume; merely to enumerate his writings with an occasional comment would result in a long and jejune chapter. Such being the case, it seems advisable to omit many titles, to discuss briefly only the significant works as they appear, and to make the best use we can of the few biographical facts of importance that have been discovered by several generations of students.

At the beginning of 1725 Defoe seems to have been living at Stoke Newington with his wife and his unmarried daughters, and to have been contributing to Applebee's *Original Weekly Journal*, as well as writing tracts about famous criminals, such as Jonathan Wild and the pirate Captain Gow. His mind was also occupied with sociological topics, and particularly with the servant problem, one of the best pamphlets of the year, *Everybody's Business Is Nobody's Business*, being devoted to that subject. This pamphlet has an added interest from the fact that in it Defoe first made use of a pen-name which he afterward employed frequently. The tract purported to be written by an old bachelor, Andrew Moreton, Esquire, who was plainly a very conservative citizen, a lover of the good old times. His strictures on the servants of his later years, particularly on maids who dressed as well as their mistresses, drew forth some amusing replies, in which a suspicious person may occasionally find reason to suspect the presence of Defoe's own hand. Speculation as to the reasons that induced him to use a *nom de plume* instead of putting forth his works anonymously as had been his custom, seems on the whole idle; but it may be noted that the change may have been due to a real or a fancied falling off of a demand on the part of publishers and of readers for his productions. Whatever the purpose of the disguise, he did not long escape detec-

tion, for the "Moreton" tracts and books were written in the same copious, clear and homely style in which *The Complete English Tradesman* and *A General History of Discoveries and Improvements* were couched. The author of the two books just named, instalments of which were issued in 1725, although they were not completed until 1727, cannot long have escaped detection.

The opening of 1726 was apparently marked by a break with Applebee, for whom Defoe had been writing nearly six years. Lee sees in the occurrence a result of the enmity shown Defoe by Mist. It seems more likely that Applebee did not relish Defoe's practice of writing a criminal tract for him and then supplying some other publisher with a rival pamphlet, or else that it was felt that a younger journalist was needed on the staff of the paper. Apparently all connection with the *Daily Post* had been broken the year before, and only one important journalistic connection, that with the *Political State* in 1729-1730, remains to be mentioned. Defoe, or rather "Andrew Moreton," complained in *The Protestant Monastery*, a pamphlet of 1726, of the way in which editors treated his communications. Perhaps he was merely trying to enlist the sympathy of readers; perhaps he was only suffering from the natural disabilities of age compelled to compete with youth, and from the personal enmities occasioned by his excessive censure of his journalistic rivals

when he was in his prime. However this may be, one cannot but chronicle with regret the practical retirement from active service of the greatest of British journalists.

The tale of pamphlets and books, nevertheless, showed little or no decline in number or in merit. In 1726 he once more wrote in behalf of his old friend, the fortune-teller and quack, Duncan Campbell; the same year he described in *Mere Nature Delineated*, a boy who had been found running wild in a German forest and had been brought to London for medical examination. Defoe is always interesting when he writes of prodigies, but he is more interesting when, as in the last-named pamphlet, he attacks his enemies. He had long despised his fellow laborer for Harley, Dean Swift, who had pretended to forget his pilloried rival's name, and now, as Swift also was apparently interested in the wild boy, the time was come for paying the debt of hatred with all accrued interest. Defoe paid it.

He also seized the opportunity this year to write upon another worthy who had long interested him—the Devil. Quaint speculations upon what the fiend looked like and what he could and could not do had found their way into the *Review*, and into other writings of our journalist, but now Defoe outdid himself in garrulous speculation in his half-skeptical, half-credulous *Political History of the Devil, as well Ancient as Modern*, a book destined to be often re-



printed within the next one hundred and twenty-five years. He could not foresee that it would one day fall into the hands of a little girl who would make remarks about it in a novel. We may be sure, however, that he would have laughed at the thought of Mr. Tulliver's buying the *History of the Devil* along with Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying*, because they were bound alike, and that he would have been careful to explain that the book when he knew it had no "dreadful picture" like that of the witch in the water upon which Maggie Tulliver commented in *The Mill on the Floss*. What Maggie would have made out of *A System of Magic; or a History of the Black Art, Being an Historical Account of Mankind's most early Dealing with the Devil*, which was issued later in 1726; or out of *An Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions*, published the next year, we need not too curiously inquire. Older people than Maggie and later novelists than George Eliot have been piqued or bored by these curious books, but the student of the occult and the admirer of Defoe will not neglect them, and the lover of books old and quaint will continue to examine them with interest. None of the stories told in them is so remarkable as *A True Relation of the Apparition of One Mrs. Veal*, but they all help to prove that Defoe did not, as he grew older, lose his gift for writing homely narrative.

This gift is not, it must be confessed, well ex-

hibited in a third book of 1726, which has been rejected by the chief bibliographers, but is certainly in part from Defoe's pen. This is *The Four Years' Voyages of Capt. George Roberts; Being a Series of Uncommon Events, which befell him in a Voyage to the Islands of the Canaries, Cape de Verde, and Barbadoes*. Although noted pirates make their appearance in its pages, and although the description of the inhabitants of the Cape de Verde Islands and of the hero's trying experiences among them is not without interest, this is probably the least readable narrative associated with Defoe's name, and one willingly accepts the theory that there was a real Captain Roberts who was helped by Defoe to put his notes and recollections into shape for publication. In other words, one would like to saddle upon a still hypothetical Roberts and the facts of his career the dulness of a book which one is forced in some way to connect with Defoe on account of a mass of internal evidence of substance and style that points unmistakably either to his editorship or to his authorship.

We naturally group with the *Voyages* of Roberts two other books, in part at least fictitious, which have also been rejected by the chief bibliographers, but are quite as clearly entitled to a place in the enormous list of Defoe's writings. These are *The Memoirs of an English Officer*, by Captain George Carleton, published in 1728, and *Madagascar: or*

*Robert Drury's Journal, during Fifteen Years' Captivity on that Island—Written by Himself*, issued in 1729. Both books differ from Roberts' *Voyages* in being decidedly readable, and in having as their ostensible authors men who are known to have existed and to have undergone, presumably, some of the experiences described. They differ further in having been looked upon by later readers as works possessing some authority, the first with regard to the War of the Spanish Succession in Spain itself and the romantic career of the Earl of Peterborough, the second with regard to the condition of Madagascar at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Both Carleton and Drury, on the score of their books, have received treatment in the great *Dictionary of National Biography*, and the former has been unhesitatingly relied on by most of the historians of England under Queen Anne and by the biographers of Peterborough. Thanks, however, to the researches of Colonel Arthur Parnell, we now know that, although Captain George Carleton was a real soldier of the times, his book is a partisan and unreliable account of the war it describes. It overestimates Peterborough's importance, and Colonel Parnell went so far as to argue acutely that it was composed in that nobleman's interest by no less a writer than his friend Dean Swift. Under the close analysis of Mr. C. E. Doble—supplemented, it may be noted, by research

and independent analysis by the present writer—the theory of Swift's authorship falls to the ground, and Defoe's connection with the book, in some capacity or other, is clearly established. Whether he edited with considerable rewriting a manuscript written by Carleton himself, or by some one in Dublin acting under Carleton's directions—the old soldier was a resident of that city—whether he merely utilized Carleton's memoranda and conversations, or whether he made up the entire book on his knowledge of the events of the period and on a few hints with regard to Carleton's personality and career derived from some unknown source, we cannot now determine with any certainty. All we can be sure of is that the fairly old tradition which connected Defoe's name with Carleton's *Memoirs* and led to the inclusion of that readable book in some editions of our author's works is substantiated by internal evidence the validity of which future analysis is not likely to shake. The case for Defoe's editorship or authorship of the *Journal* of Robert Drury, who after his long captivity settled down to life in an humble capacity in London, is not, perhaps, quite so strong as the case for the veteran writer's responsibility for Carleton's *Memoirs*, but there is comparatively little reason to doubt that *Madagascar* or *Drury's Journal* is the last, or one of the last, of the narratives of adventure which we owe to the pen of the creator of *Robinson Crusoe*. It seems to

show that, although after 1724 Defoe probably did not attempt any purely fictitious narrative on a large scale, he was able to embellish and make readable his accounts of the adventures of real men.

The year 1727 saw the publication of pamphlets of a "jingo" character occasioned by the prospect of a war with Spain, as well as of an excellent tract on the woolen industry. To these were added three large books, one, the already mentioned *Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions*, which was re-issued in 1729 as *The Secrets of the Invisible World Disclosed—By Andrew Moreton, Esq.*; another, a disagreeable and superfluous treatise on certain delicate matrimonial problems that had long exercised its author's imagination; the third, another of his manuals of moral advice, *The New Family Instructor*, which did not rival its predecessor, *The Family Instructor*, in popularity. In *Robinson Crusoe* Defoe had shown some liberality in his attitude toward Roman Catholics, and there is evidence in other books that as he grew older he became less narrow in his religious and theological views; but *The New Family Instructor* shows us plainly that he could not rid himself entirely of the prejudices of his youth. Indeed, much of his later work is permeated by the spirit of the *laudator temporis acti*, the encomiast of the good old times. Perhaps this spirit was partly stimulated by the wide reading in ancient history which appears to

have occupied him when he was not writing or scheming how to make his fortune in business.

Yet absorption in the past and schemes of personal aggrandizement did not prevent him from considering the needs of the present and endeavoring to be of service to others. Probably the most important books and pamphlets of the last three years of his life are those in which he encourages his countrymen to develop the commerce which is the mainstay of their island nation, in which he pleads for the relief of poor prisoners for debt, in which he describes how London, his native city, for which he had an unsurpassed love and admiration, could be freed in large measure from vice and poverty and made "the most flourishing city in the universe." The phrase just quoted forms part of the title of one of the best of all his pamphlets, *Augusta Triumphans*, issued in 1728.<sup>1</sup> Nowhere else, unless it be in the *Essay upon Projects*, is Defoe's active, benevolent, and one might almost say, socially-prophetic mind more attractively exhibited. In short compass and in clear homely language he pleaded for the establishment of a university in the metropolis and of a hospital for foundlings; for the suppression of "pretended mad-houses, where many of the fair sex" were unjustly confined by their faithless husbands, and many widows were "locked up for the sake of their jointure"; for the

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<sup>1</sup> See the selection given at p. 292.



protection of youth from temptations to gaming and other vices and of the poor from the dangers resulting from an "immoderate use of Geneva"; for the formation of an academy of native musicians; and for the adoption of "an effectual method to prevent street robberies."

The last reform was one that Defoe had much at heart at a time when London was full of violent characters. He complained later that some dishonest person had appropriated his plans to suppress robbers, and he returned to the subject in several interesting tracts. It is needless to add that in some respects he was more than a century ahead of his age, but it is worth while to observe that his proposal to establish an academy of musicians represents an element in his composition to which insufficient attention has been paid by students. As we have seen, he has been consistently treated as a man of marked bourgeois limitations, as one whose proper function it was to give his fellow shopkeepers sordid advice in books like *The Complete English Tradesman*, that curiously interesting manual which contemporary merchants bought by the half dozen copies to give away, but in which Charles Lamb discovered a menace to the morals of his countrymen! Yet there is good evidence that he was fond of music, that he knew something about pictures, that he was much interested in architecture and in landscape gardening, and that his taste for

good literature was genuine and his knowledge of it somewhat exceptional. His constant insistence upon his status as a gentleman—the last important writing he did in the shape of a book was the treatise entitled *The Complete English Gentleman*—may be regarded as an innocent foible, but it is a foible that is ultimately related with faculties and acquisitions for which he should be given due credit. Yet it is idle not to admit that the typical Defoe is found, not in the man of culture, but in the writer who is an almost unique combination of the practical merchant, the economist, and the journalistic expositor—the Defoe of *A Plan of the English Commerce. Being a Compleat Prospect of the Trade of this Nation, as well the Home Trade as the Foreign*. To call such a book fascinating would doubtless seem to most people an exaggeration and a misuse of words, but the praise and the choice of epithet might be defended by readers interested in the topics Defoe treated with such varied knowledge and in so interesting a fashion.<sup>2</sup>

How now shall we be able to present at all adequately in our selections the works of these three years, which amount to several thousand pages? The attempt would be quite as hopeless as a similar attempt in the case of the fiction. All one can hope to do is to interest the reader in a few passages from

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<sup>2</sup> See the selection given at p. 300.

a few valuable books like the *Tour* and the *Plan of the English Commerce*, to make quotations from some rare and curious pamphlets, to give a mere glimpse of Defoe's attitude toward his arch enemy, the Devil—and to trust to the quaint, homely writer's carrying power making itself felt even after the lapse of nearly two centuries.

### *The Terrace Walk At Windsor Castle*<sup>3</sup>

"This walk was really a magnificent work; for as it is raised on the side of a precipice, or steep declivity of the hill, so that hill was necessarily cut down a very great depth to bring the foundation to a flat equal to the breadth, which was to be formed above. From the foundation it was raised by solid stonework, of a vast thickness, with cross walls of stone, for banding the front, and preventing any thrust from the weight of earth within. Then this work was all to be filled up again within, after all that was first taken out, was thrown down the

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<sup>3</sup> From "A Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain, Divided into Circuits or Journies. Giving a Particular and Diverting Account of Whatever is Curious, and worth Observation, Viz. I. A Description of the principal Cities and Towns, their Situation, Magnitude, Government, and Commerce. II. The Customs, Manners, Speech, as also the Exercises, Diversions, and Employment of the People. III. The Produce and Improvement of the Lands, the Trade and Manufactures. IV. The Sea-Ports and Fortifications, the Course of Rivers, and the Inland Navigation. V. The Publick Edifices, Seats, and Palaces of the Nobility and Gentry. With Useful Observations upon the Whole. Particularly fitted for the Reading of such as desire to Travel over the Island. . . . By a Gentleman." 1725. Vol. II, Letter 1, pp. 76-78.

front of the hill, to push out the precipices still farther, that it might be the same slope from the terrace, as it was before from the foot of the castle.

“This noble walk is covered with fine gravel, and has cavities, with drains, to carry off all the water; so that let it rain as it will, not a drop of it is seen to rest on the walk, but it is dry, hard, and fit to walk on immediately. The breadth of this walk is very spacious on the north side, on the east side it is narrower; but neither at Versailles, or at any of the royal palaces in France, or at Rome, or Naples, have I ever seen anything like it. The Grand Seignior’s Terrace in the outer court of the Seraglio, next the sea, is the nearest to it, that I have read of, and yet not equal to it, if I may believe the account of those who have seen it; for that, I acknowledge, I have not seen. At the northeast corner of this terrace, where it turns south, to run on by the east side of the castle, there are steps, by which you go off upon the plain of the park, which is kept smooth as a carpet, and on the edge of which, the prospect of the terrace is doubled by a vista, south over the park, and quite up to the great park, and towards the forest. Here also is a small seat, fit for one, or but two at the most, with a high back, and cover for the head, which turns so easily, the whole being fixed on a pin of iron, or brass, of strength sufficient, that the persons who sit in it may turn it from the wind, and which way soever the wind blows, or how hard soever, yet they may sit in a perfect tranquility, and enjoy a complete calm. This is said also, to be Queen Elizabeth’s own invention, who, though she delighted in being abroad in the air, yet hated to be ruffled with the wind. It is also an admirable con-

trivance for the person sitting in it, to shelter himself from the sun.

“This lofty terrace makes the castle quite another thing, and gives an egress to the people within to the park, and to a most beautiful walk, which King Edward III nor his successors for some hundreds of years, knew nothing of, all their prospect being from the windows of the castle.”

### *The Post Office in London<sup>4</sup>*

“The Post Office, a branch of the revenue formerly not much valued, but now, by the additional penny upon the letters, and by the visible increase of business in the nation, is grown very considerable. This office maintains now, packet boats to Spain and Portugal, which never was done before. So the merchants’ letters for Cadiz or Lisbon, which were before two and twenty days in going over France and Spain to Lisbon, oftentimes arrive there now in nine or ten days from Falmouth.

“Likewise, they have a packet from Marseilles to Port Mahon, in the Mediterranean, for the constant communication of letters with his Majesty’s garrison and people in the island of Minorca.

“They have also a packet from England to the West Indies, but I am not of opinion, that they will keep it up for much time longer, if it be not already let fall.

“This office is kept in Lombard Street, in a large house, formerly Sir Robert Viner’s, once a rich goldsmith; but ruined at the shutting up of the Exchequer, as above.

“The Penny Post, a modern contrivance of a pri-

<sup>4</sup> From the same, pp. 135-137.

vate person, one Mr. William Dockraw,<sup>5</sup> is now made a branch of the general revenue by the Post Office; and though, for a time, it was subject to mis-carriages and mistakes, yet now it is come also into so exquisite a management, that nothing can be more exact, and 'tis with the utmost safety and dispatch, that letters are delivered at the remotest corners of the town, almost as soon as they could be sent by a messenger, and that from four, five, six, to eight times a day, according as the distance of the place makes it practicable; and you may send a letter from Ratcliff or Limehouse in the East, to the farthest part of Westminster for a penny, and that several times in the same day.

"Nor are you tied up to a single piece of paper, as in the general post office, but any packet under a pound weight, goes at the same price.

"I mention this the more particularly, because it is so manifest a testimony to the greatness of this city, and to the great extent of business and commerce in it, that this penny conveyance should raise so many thousand pounds in a year, and employ so many poor people in the diligence of it, as this office employs.

"We see nothing of this at Paris, at Amsterdam, at Hamburg, or any other city, that ever I have seen, or heard of."

### *Shakespeare's Bust at Stratford*<sup>6</sup>

"At this last town, going into the parish church, we saw the monument of old Shakespeare, the fa-

<sup>5</sup> Dockwra, or Dockwray, died in 1716; he established his system in 1683.

<sup>6</sup> From the same, Letter II, p 63.



mous poet, and whose dramatic performances so justly maintain his character among the British poets; and perhaps will do so to the end of time. The *busto* of his head is in the wall on the north side of the church, and a flat grave-stone covers the body, in the aisle just under him. On which grave-stone these lines are written :

“ ‘Good Friend, for Jesus’s Sake, forbear  
To move the Dust that resteth here.  
Blest be the Man that spares these Stones,  
And Curst be he, that moves my Bones.’ ”

*Adventures Among the Hills Between Rochdale  
and Halifax*<sup>7</sup>

“I followed this post-road from Liverpool to Bury and Rochdale, both manufacturing towns in Lancashire, and the last very considerable, for a sort of coarse<sup>8</sup> goods called half-thicks and kersies, and the market for them is very great, tho’ otherwise the town is situated so remote, so out of the way, and so at the very foot of the mountains, that we may suppose it would be but little frequented.

“Here, for our great encouragement, though we were but at the middle of August, and in some places the harvest was hardly got in, we saw the mountains covered with snow, and felt the cold very acute and piercing; but even here we found, as in all those northern countries is the case, the people had an extraordinary way of mixing the warm and the cold very happily together; for the store of good ale

<sup>7</sup> From the same, Vol. III, 1727, Letter I, pp. 91-97.

<sup>8</sup> The original spells *course*.

which flows plentifully in the most mountainous part of this country, seems abundantly to make up for all the inclemencies of the season, or difficulties of travelling, adding also the plenty of coals for firing, which all those hills are full of.

“We mounted the hills, fortified with the same precaution, early in the morning, and though the snow which had fallen in the night lay a little upon the ground, yet we thought it was not much; and the morning being calm and clear, we had no apprehension of an uneasy passage, neither did the people at Rochdale, who kindly directed us the way, and even offered to guide us over the first mountains, apprehend any difficulty for us; so we complimented ourselves out of their assistance, which we afterwards very much wanted.

“It was, as I say, calm and clear, and the sun shone when we came out of the town of Rochdale; but when we began to mount the hills, which we did within a mile, or little more, of the town, we found the wind began to rise, and the higher we went the more wind; by which I soon perceived that it had blown before, and perhaps all night, upon the hills, tho’ it was calm below; as we ascended higher, it began to snow again, that is to say, we ascended into that part where it was snowing, and had, no doubt, been snowing all night, as we could easily see by the thickness of the snow.

“It is not easy to express the consternation we were in when we came up near the top of the mountain; the wind blew exceeding hard, and blew the snow so directly in our faces, and that so thick, that it was impossible to keep our eyes open to see our way. The ground also was so covered with snow,

that we could see no track, or when we were in the way, or when out; except when we were shewed it by a frightful precipice on one hand, and uneven ground on the other; even our horses discovered their uneasiness at it; and a poor spaniel dog that was my fellow traveller, and usually diverted us with giving us a mark for our gun, turned tail to it and cried.

“In the middle of this difficulty, and as we began to call to one another to turn back again, not knowing what dangers might still be before us, came a surprising clap of thunder, the first that ever I heard in a storm of snow, or, I believe, ever shall; nor did we perceive any lightning to precede the thunder, as must naturally be the case; but we supposed the thick falling of the snow might prevent our sight.

“I must confess I was very much surprised at this blow; and one of our company would not be persuaded that it was thunder, but that it was some blast of a coal-pit, things which do sometimes happen in the country, where there are many coal mines. But we were all against him in that, and were fully satisfied that it was thunder, and, as we fancied, at last we were confirmed in it, by hearing more of it at a distance from us.

“Upon this we made a full stop, and coming all together,<sup>9</sup> for we were then three in company, with two servants, we began to talk seriously of going back again to Rochdale; but just then one of our men called out to us, and said, he was upon the top of the hill, and could see over into Yorkshire,

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<sup>9</sup> The original has *altogether*.

and that there was a plain way down on the other side.

“We rode all up to him, and found it as the fellow had said, all but that of a plain way; there was indeed the mark or face of a road on the side of the hill, a little turning to the left north; but it was so narrow, and so deep a hollow place on the right, whence the water descending from the hills made a channel at the bottom, and looked as the beginning of a river, that the depth of the precipice, and the narrowness of the way, looked horrible to us; after going a little way in it, the way being blinded too by the snow, the hollow on the right appeared deeper and deeper, so we resolved to alight and lead our horses, which we did for about a mile, though the violence of the wind and snow continuing, it was both very troublesome and dangerous.

“The only reliefs we had in this track were (1) that we perceived some landmarks, or tokens, which the honest Rochdale men had given us notice of, by which we believed we were right in the way; for till then we knew nothing where we were, or whether we were right or wrong. And (2) that, as the road we were in descended apace, for it went very steep down, we found the lower we went, the violence of the snow abated, just as on the other side of the hill, the higher we went, it had encreased.

“At length, to our great joy, we found too the wind abated, as well as the snow, that is to say, the hills being so high behind us, they kept back the wind, as is the case under a high wall, though you are on the windward side of it, yet the wind, having no

passage through, is not felt, as it would be on the top where the space is open for it to pass.

“All this way, the hollow on our right continued very deep, and just on the other side of it a parallel hill continued going on east, as that did which we rode on the side of; the main hill which we came down from, which is properly called Blackstone Edge, or, by the country people, the Edge, without any surname or addition, ran along due north, crossing and shutting up those hollow gulls and vallies between, which were certainly originally formed by the rain and snow-water running into them, and forcing its way down, washing the earth gradually along with it, till, by length of time, it wore down the surface to such a depth.

“We continued descending still, and as the weather was quieter, so the way seemed to mend and be broader, and, to our great satisfaction, inclining more to the hill on the left; the precipice and hollow part, where the water run, as I have said, went a little off from us, and by and by, to our no small comfort, we saw an enclosed piece of ground, that is enclosed with a stone wall, and soon after a house, where we asked our way, and found we were right.

“Soon after this we came to the bottom, by another very steep descent, where we were obliged to alight again, and lead our horses. At the bottom, we found the hollow part, which I have so often mentioned as a precipice, was come to a level with us, that is to say, we were come down to a level with it, and it turning to the left toward us, we found a brook of water running from it, which crossed our way to the north, you shall hear of it again pres-

ently; when we crossed this brook, which, by reason of the snow on the hills which melted, was risen about knee deep, and run like a sluice for strength, we found a few poor houses, but saw no people, no, not one, till we called at a door, to get directions of our way, and then we found that though there was no body to be seen without doors, they were very full of people within, and so we found it on several occasions afterward, of which we shall speak again.

“We thought now we were come into a Christian country again, and that our difficulties were over; but we soon found ourselves mistaken in the matter; for we had not gone fifty yards beyond the brook and houses adjacent, but we found the way began to ascend again, and soon after to go up very steep, till in about half a mile we found we had another mountain to ascend, in our apprehension as bad as the first, and before we came to the top of it, we found it began to snow, too, as it had done before.

“But to cut short the tedious day’s work, the case was this; the hill was very high, and, in our opinion, not inferior to the Edge which we came just down from; but the sun being higher, and the wind not blowing so hard, what snow fell upon the hill melted as it fell, and so we saw our way plainer, and mastered the hill, though with some labour, yet not any terror or apprehensions of losing our way, falling down precipices, and the like.

“But our case was still this: that as soon as we were at the top of every hill, we had it to come down again on the other side; and as soon as we were down, we had another to mount, and that immediately; for I do not remember that there was one



bottom that had any considerable breadth of plain ground in it, but always a brook in the valley running from those gulls and deeps between the hills, with this remark, that they always crossed our way in the bottoms from the right hand to the left, the reason of which you shall see presently.

“From Blackstone Edge to Halifax is eight miles, and all the way, except from Sorby to Halifax, is thus up hill and down; so that, I suppose, we mounted to the clouds and descended to the water level about eight times, in that little part of the journey.”

*The Trade of Slipping Gentlemen's Swords Off  
From Their Sides*<sup>10</sup>

“Blewet had, it seems, gone thro’ all those degrees, and, I am assured, served a full apprenticeship to the first, for that he was no less than seven years a pickpocket, inclusive of one year which he set apart for a particular trade, of slipping gentlemen’s swords off from their sides. In this he was so successful, that if I may believe a particular person of credit, with the late Jonathan Wild, Mr. Blewet had no less than sixteen silver hilted swords in his custody at one time, and one gold one.

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<sup>10</sup> From “A Brief Historical Account of the Lives of the Six notorious Street-Robbers, Executed at Kingston, viz. William Blewet, Edward Bunworth, Emanuel Dickenson, Thomas Berry, John Higges, and John Legee. With a particular Relation of their early Introduction into the desperate Trade of Street-Robbing, and especially of Murther, and of several Robberies which they, and others of their Gang, have been concern’d in.” 1726, pp. 6–9. This is one of the rarest of Defoe’s tracts. Mr. Aitken, when he reprinted it, knew of but one copy, that which had belonged successively to Reed, Heber, Crossley, and Rigall. This selection is taken from another copy which has since turned up.

Whether Jonathan and he had an understanding together in the managing part of the whole cargo, I cannot answer to that in particular, but that they had in part of it, I have some reason to say there is no doubt of that.

“As Blewet carried on this trade long before he removed into a higher employment, it may not be amiss to give some particular account of his conduct, and especially of some very nice and narrow escapes he made, when he was even at the very brink of being taken. One night in particular, as he was out upon the lay, he observes a grave gentleman walking soberly and slowly along the street, with his hat under his arm, the weather being hot, and having, upon looking narrowly into the matter, found that he had on a silver-hilted sword, for it was necessary to be satisfied in that part before any hazard was run: I say, having found it to be right, he follows the gentleman to the door of the George right against Stocks-Market, when he comes up behind him, and gives the gentleman’s hat a push with his hand, so that it flew forward from under his arm, which he knew very well would occasion the gentleman to step forward too, and stoop for his hat, and accordingly the gentleman did so.

“At the moment the gentleman stooped, the artist laid hold of the silver-hilted sword, and gave it a gentle pull horizontally, parallel with the belt, the belt being a little raised up to bring it out strait, that so the sword might come out without the wearer’s feeling it, by pulling the belt; that is to say, in few words, he pulled it according to art.

“But the gentleman, who, as he said afterwards, had lost a sword by the same method before, had

used himself constantly to hook his sword into his belt, by the hook on the scabbard; and the sword not coming easily out of the scabbard, nor the scabbard easily out of the belt, either of which would have served his turn, he was baulked in the enterprise.

“However, he let go his hold of the sword so dexterously, that had not the following accident intervened, he had never been in any danger. But the old gentleman, however surprised with the thrusting down his hat, yet recovered it so soon, and turned about so nimbly, that with his cane he strook the operator a terrible blow on the head, and knocked him down. This he did, not really distinctly seeing the fellow, because it was dark, and not knowing anything of the design upon the sword, but as he thought somebody behind him had affronted him, and so strook at an adventure, fall where it would.

“But another incident opened his eyes to the whole design, for in the sudden turn the gentleman gave, he felt his sword give a pull at his side-belt, having been let go a little too soon before the hilt. As this was a defect of art, so it gave the gentleman to understand, that if his sword had not been hooked to the belt, or if the blade had come easily out of the scabbard, it had been gone.

“As I say this was a defect of art, it is necessary to note, for the reader’s understanding, what the words of command in this exercise of taking a sword off are. And first it seems it is thus:

“1. *Lay your right hand upon the belt.*

“2. *Lift the belt gently up with your right hand that it may not be felt.*

*"3. Lay your right hand upon the hilt.*

*"4. Lower the hilt gently to a level, with the scabbard in the belt.*

*"5. When they are exactly on a level, pull the hilt gently to the left, still keeping it upon a straight line with the scabbard, and you are sure of it, provided it be not hooked, but if you find it hooked, and so the scabbard will not then draw,*

*"6. Quit your hold of the hilt first, and the very moment you find it will not come,*

*"7. Quit your hold of the belt, lowering it a little gently at first, as before you raised it, that it may not be felt.*

*"If you find the gentleman has not perceived you, and that you are come off safe, follow him a little farther, and taking your opportunity, make another attempt, not for the sword and scabbard out of the belt, but for the sword out of the scabbard, leaving the scabbard in the belt. The directions are as follows:*

*"1. Lay your right hand on the scabbard, in that part which is in the belt, so that your hand may grip the scabbard and belt together, and be sure to hold them both very hard in your hand.*

*"2. Lift the scabbard and belt together gently upwards, as before, but not quite so high as to lie upon a level.*

*"3. Lay your left hand upon the hilt, and with a swift strong stroke, draw it out of the scabbard.*

*"4. Then lowering the belt and scabbard gently with your right hand, quit them and make off with your prize.*

*"5. The first cellar window you come at with iron bars, thrust in the blade of the sword, and break it*

*off from the hilt at one blow, lest you be seen running with a naked sword, which will give an alarm.*

“These rules of art, tho’ Mr. Blewet was thoroughly acquainted with them, yet it seems he was not so exact in the execution as he ought to have been, but that letting go with his right hand before his left, the gentleman felt the jerk or twitch of his left hand at the sword, and knew by it what was the design. Upon this discovery he challenged him loudly with the attempt, but the artist denying, quarrelled as loudly at him for striking him without cause, pretending he was only crossing the pavement behind him to go into the passage to the George, which was a public house. This was a probable, tho’ really a feigned excuse; and as the gentleman could not prove that he, Blewet, had done anything, the people began to gather about Blewet, and take his part, and were for carrying the injured gentleman before my Lord Mayor; but Blewet had no mind to venture his character to a further enquiry, so he let it drop, and went off well satisfied that he got off so well.”

*Speculations on Good and Evil, With a Stab at  
Dr. Swift<sup>11</sup>*

“And here a speculation of infinite force and signification occurs to me, namely, how impossible it

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<sup>11</sup> From “Mere Nature Delineated: or, a Body without a Soul. Being Observations upon the Young Forester Lately brought to Town from Germany. With Suitable Applications. Also, A Brief Dissertation upon the Usefulness and Necessity of Fools, whether Political or Natural.” 1726, pp. 43-45. This also is one of the rarest of Defoe’s productions. Only two copies seem to have come to light in recent years.

is now, in the nature of the thing, for this youth<sup>12</sup> to attain to the full exercise of the faculties and powers of a reasoning soul, without taking in, at the same time, with the same instruction, all the wicked part too! Nothing of virtue, nothing sound, nay, even religious, can be taught him, but all those hell-born *addenda* will be let in with, and break out among them. As soon as he distinguishes of wealth and poverty, avarice is the consequence; he covets the first, fears and hates the last, and with coveting comes in a thousand injurious and dishonest, nay, thievish imaginations to compass it. No sooner does he see wealth, clothed with power and dominion, but ambition, the first-born child of crime, the self-begotten sin of witchcraft, breaks out in the soul; attended with all its lesser devils, inseparable attendants of its very nature; I mean envy, malice, rage, murder, and blood. Unhappy man, that his soul cannot receive the good without the evil! Tell us, ye Right Reverend and Reverend,

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<sup>12</sup> Peter the Wild Boy, the subject of Defoe's speculations, is thus introduced to the reader at the beginning of the tract. "A youth is brought over hither, said to be taken up in the forest or waste of the country of Zell, near the city of Hamelen, or somewhere thereabouts, for it matters not much, in what district or country, in what village or parish it was, any farther than to enquire into the truth of the story. Here they tell us, he was found wild, naked, dumb; known to, and knowing nobody. That he lived a vegetative life, fed on grass, moss, leaves of trees, and the like; that he acted below brutal life, hardly a sensitive, and not at all a rational.

"They hardly allow, that he walked or stepped erect, but rather creeping on hands and knees, climbing trees like a cat, sitting on the boughs like a monkey, and the like; tho' in that part we must not carry our fancy beyond the fact, because we see him at present standing upright, as the soul-informed part of mankind do; all which we shall examine in its place." (Pp. 2, 3.)



the guides of the world, whence is it that 'tis impossible to communicate to a human creature the virtues of a Christian life, untainted with the knowledge and gust of crime; or to bring the man to the knowledge of the brightest part, but the vice comes in at the very same door? 'Tis evident he may learn the wicked part, even without so much as a taste of what is good, the pollution shall come without the rectitude of his soul. But, as if virtue and religion were an introduction to vice and prophaneness, he is no sooner instructed in the first, but of course, he understands the last.

"Even the Tree of Knowledge has this part discovered in its title, and no doubt they came together; it was the Tree of Knowledge of Good and of Evil; they were taken in together, and are still inseparable.

"But whence then comes the knowledge of evil to prevail? And seeing virtue is beauty in its brightest perfection, is its own reward, and infinitely desirable for itself, why does mere nature lead to foolish things by the course of its own instinct? Why hurry the soul down the stream of his<sup>13</sup> affections, and, with inexpressible gust, to what is gross, sordid, and brutish; whereas wisdom and virtuous principles are all up hill, against the stream, and are rather acquired than natural? Let those who deny original depravity, answer this for me, if they think they can; for my part, I acknowledge it to be out of my reach, upon any other foot.

"But I leave this as too solemn for the day, however useful. And to return to our Lunenburger;

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<sup>13</sup> Probably a case of the old use of "his" for "its."

let him be as he is, and let that be as it will, we see a great many merry things occur to our thoughts about him, and some very much for the instruction of our neighbours, who think they have more wit than he, and yet hardly give any body leave to think so but themselves. But I shall first conclude this part with a brief contemplation upon the misery of mankind, under the disaster of being born deaf, and upon the surprising operation of teaching such to speak, of which I have taken notice above, and of which we have such extraordinary instances at this time in being.<sup>14</sup>

“That this speculation should not appear too grave for the world, for I know they are out of love with dull philosophy, as well as with divinity, I have obliged it to jingle a little in verse;<sup>15</sup> but however poetical it may be, the subject being really solemn, it will run into a vein of solid thinking. If it should be disagreeable to the fashionable levity of the times on that account, some that have more wit than I, may turn it into jest, and burlesque the calamity of mankind, if they think it more agreeable. I am mighty willing to leave it to the learned Dr. S——<sup>16</sup>; for he that can preach and read prayers in the morning, write bawdy in the afternoon, banter Heaven and religion, and write prophanely at night, and then read prayers and preach again the

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<sup>14</sup> Defoe refers back to pp. 38–40 of his tract, where he pays a tribute to the method for teaching the deaf and dumb, devised by Henry Baker, his future son-in-law.

<sup>15</sup> This selection is followed in the original by eight pages of couplets “On the Deaf and Dumb being taught to Speak.”

<sup>16</sup> Defoe probably had in mind one or both of two skits associated with Swift, *The Most Wonderful Wonder, that ever appeared to the Wonder of the British Nation and It cannot Rain but it Pours: or, London Strow'd with Rarities.*

next morning, and so on in a due rotation of extremes, is much fitter than I am for turning the tears of the unhappy into a ballad, and making a mock of human misery."

*The Devil No Prophet*<sup>17</sup>

"*Daugh[ter]*. Indeed these things [the Prophecies of the Captivity] do not look as if man could reveal and discover them, I cannot conceive which way they could be predicted; it must be either from God or the Devil.

"*Fa[ther]*. As to that, now you have mentioned the Devil, it is very well worth while to observe, that God has thought fit to make the Devil himself a witness to the superiority of Scripture Predictions.

"*Daugh.* How is that, sir?

"*Fa.* Why, first, 'tis plain that the Devil knows nothing beforehand; it seems very remarkable that tho' he is an inlightened seraph, an intelligent spirit, yet God has withheld from him the knowledge of futurity, or taken it away from him if ever he had it;

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<sup>17</sup> From "A New Family Instructor; in Familiar Discourses between a Father and his Children, On the most Essential Points of the Christian Religion. In Two Parts. Part I. Containing a Father's Instructions to his Son upon his going to Travel into Popish Countries; And to the rest of his Children, on his Son's turning Papist; confirming them in the Protestant Religion, against the Absurdities of Popery. Part II. Instructions against the Three Grand Errors of the Times; Viz. 1. Asserting the Divine Authority of the Scripture; against the Deists. 2. Proofs, that the Messiah is already come, &c. against the Atheists and Jews. 3. Asserting, the Divinity of Jesus Christ, that he was really the Same with the Messiah, and that the Messiah was to be really God; against our Modern Hereticks. With a Poem upon the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ, in Blank Verse. By the Author of the Family Instructor." 1727, pp. 269-272.

that the whole glory of Scripture Prophecy<sup>18</sup> might naturally and necessarily center in himself.

*“Daugh.* So that you do not think the Devil has any power of prediction, or the knowledge of what is to come?

*“Fa.* No, not at all; except it be that he knows his own fate, that he shall be chained down at last in the Regions of Darkness; but even of that he does not know the time, perhaps not the place.

*“Daugh.* But did not the Devil’s oracles predict things in the time of the pagan idolatry?

*“Fa.* No, I cannot allow that they did; they gave out subtle, ambiguous, and doubtful answers, to accuse and delude the credulous and ignorant people, and this was the most; all the rest I take to be fictitious, published by the priests, to support their credit; ’twas manifest on many occasions, and particularly in the case of Julian the Apostate; he sent to all the oracles, to all the soothsayers, to all the Augurs,<sup>19</sup> to know if his Persian war should be prosperous, and they all flattered him with promises of victory and glory, whereas he was killed in the very first battle.

“History informs us of a certain famous she-magician, who pretended that the Devil spoke in her, and so gave answers to all the doubtful questions that were brought to her, and it was observed that she spoke wonderfully of things past, and gave wise decisions in matters of dispute; but she was always at a loss when they enquired of things to come, and, in short, to use the words of the author

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<sup>18</sup> So in the original. So also *center* in the next line.

<sup>19</sup> The original has *Augures*.

that wrote of her, 'The Devil always lied when he meddled with prophesy.'

*"Daugh.* So that the Devil knows nothing of what is to come?

*"Fa.* No, nothing; how should the Devil know anything of what is doing in Heaven?

*"Daugh.* Nay, that's true; I believe he has no correspondence there.

*"Fa.* There are no traitors there now, to discover the arcana of Heaven to him.

*"Daugh.* Indeed, I never considered that before; I do not see how he, that is cast out from that place, should know anything of the counsels that are transacted there.

*"Fa.* And this, I say, is a strong confirmation that the Scripture is of divine and heavenly original, since the counsels of Heaven are revealed in it, which neither men or devils could ever arrive to the knowledge of, but from God himself, who rules in Heaven, and who alone could reveal them.

*"Daugh.* And we have no reason to believe he would reveal them, especially to his enemy the Devil.

*"Fa.* To what purpose should those things be revealed to the Devil? Has not God always chosen the holiest and humblest, and the most beloved of his creatures to reveal his mind and will to;<sup>20</sup> as, to Moses, Elijah, Daniel, who the text calls 'greatly beloved,' and to St. John, the 'beloved Disciple?' And would he honour the implacable enemy of his kingdom, and of his glory, with the same revelation? It is not rational to think so.

*"Daugh.* No, indeed, it is not reasonable to think so.

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<sup>20</sup> The original has *too*.

*Fa.* Besides, you find, throughout the whole Scripture, that the Devil's agents could never foretell anything, but always accused and imposed upon the people with lies and delusions, and they are therefore called false prophets, and proved to be so upon many occasions.

*Daugh.* That is true indeed; they could not interpret Pharaoh's dream to him, which foretold things to come.

*Fa.* Nor could they reveal Nebuchadnezzar's dream to him, nor read the handwriting upon the wall of King Belshazzar; nay, they told the king in the case of the first, that it was what no magicians upon earth could do, or ever were known to do, and that it was an unreasonable thing for the king to desire it of them; for they add, and therein they spoke truth, 'There is none other that can shew it before the king, except the Gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh,' Dan. ii, 21 [11]. And Daniel in his thanksgiving, ver. 22, of the same chapter, speaking of the glory of God's infinite wisdom and knowledge, adds, 'He revealeth the deep and secret things: He knoweth what is in the darkness.'

*Daugh.* But we read that Balaam prophesied, and yet he was a false prophet, and is called so in the Scripture.

*Fa.* That is a particular case wherein God appeared to a wicked man, magnifying his power in overruling what the Devil designed to do by his hand, and is an argument to prove what I say, not contradict it; for God reduced that false prophet to the necessity of speaking truth, and put words into his mouth, and so God was pleased to make him prophesy of Christ; but it was, as he owns, in a



*trance*, a kind of agitation, and he spoke, by a particular inspiration, things which without it he could have known nothing of.

*“Daugh.* What do you conclude from all this, Sir?

*“Fa.* I say all this confirms the divine authority of the Scripture, seeing as the Scripture is full of glorious and inimitable predictions, most of which are already punctually come to pass, tho’ at the distance of hundreds, nay, thousands of years, and that it is apparent that the Devil has no power of prediction, no foreknowledge of things to come; it must be then that God alone has spoken in all those prophecies, that the Scripture is dictated by his immediate spirit, and that it is really the Word of God.

*“Daugh.* It is an argument indeed which I never heard before; I always thought the Devil could tell folks what would come to pass, and that made me say before that it must be either from God or the Devil; I am sure the Devil and his false prophets have always pretended to it; but I am convinced now, and I see plainly that, as you said, it is not rational to think the Devil should have correspondence in Heaven, or that the counsels of eternity should be betrayed to him; it is clear to me then, that all the Scripture Prophecies are from Heaven.

*“Fa.* All from Heaven, child! all, the voice of God! God speaking at first, and predicting; as their fulfilling is the voice and power of the same God performing.”

*A Plea Against Brutal Treatment of Women*<sup>21</sup>

"And now I have mentioned the villainy of some husbands in the lower state of life, give me leave to propose, or at least to wish, that they were restrained from abusing their wives at that barbarous rate, which is now practised by butchers, carmen, and such inferior sort of fellows, who are public nuisances to civil neighbourhoods, and yet no body cares to interpose, because the riot is between a man and his wife.

"I see no reason why every profligate fellow shall have the liberty to disturb a whole neighbourhood, and abuse a poor, honest creature at a most inhuman rate, and is not to be called to account because it is his wife; this sort of barbarity was never so notorious and so much encouraged as at present, for every vagabond thinks he may cripple his wife at pleasure, and 'tis enough to pierce a heart of stone

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<sup>21</sup> From "Augusta Triumphans: or, the Way to make London The most flourishing City in the Universe. First, By establishing an University where Gentlemen may have Academical Education under the Eye of their Friends. II. To prevent much Murder, &c. by an Hospital for Foundlings. III. By suppressing pretended Mad-Houses, where many of the fair Sex are unjustly confin'd, while their Husbands keep Mistresses, &c. and many Widows are lock'd up for the Sake of their Jointure. IV. To save our Youth from Destruction, by clearing the Streets of impudent Strumpets, Suppressing Gaming-Tables, and Sunday Debauches. V. To avoid the expensive Importation of Foreign Musicians, by forming an Academy of our own. VI. To save our lower Class of People from utter Ruin, and render them useful, by preventing the immoderate Use of Geneva: With a frank Explosion of many other common Abuses, and incontestable Rules for Amendment. Concluding with An effectual Method to prevent Street Robberies; and A Letter to Coll. Robinson, on account of the Orphan's Tax." 1728, pp. 28-38.

to see how barbarously some poor creatures are beaten and abused by merciless dogs of husbands.

"It gives an ill example to the growing generation, and this evil will gain ground on us if not prevented. It may be answered the law has already provided redress, and a woman abused may swear the peace against her husband, but what woman cares to do that? It is revenging herself on herself, and not without considerable charge and trouble.

"There ought to be a shorter way, and when a man has beaten his wife (which by the bye is a most unmanly action, and great sign of cowardice) it behooves every neighbour who has the least humanity or compassion, to complain to the next justice of the peace, who should be impowered to set him in the stocks for the first offence; to have him well scourged at the whipping-post for the second; and if he persisted in his barbarous abuse of the holy marriage state, to send him to the house of correction 'till he should learn to use more mercy to his yoke-fellow.

"How hard is it for a poor industrious woman to be up early and late, to sit in a cold shop, stall, or market, all weathers, to carry heavy loads from one end of the town to the other, or to work from morning till night, and even then dread going home for fear of being murdered? Some may think this too low a topic for me to expatiate upon, to which I answer, that it is a charitable and a Christian one, and therefore not in the least beneath the consideration of any man who had a woman for his mother.

"The mention of this leads me to exclaim against the vile practice now so much in vogue among the better sort, as they are called, but the worst sort in

fact, namely, the sending their wives to mad-houses at every whim or dislike, that they may be more secure and undisturbed in their debaucheries, which wicked custom is got to such a head, that the number of private mad-houses in and about London are considerably increased within these few years.

“This is the height of barbarity and injustice in a Christian country, it is a clandestine Inquisition, nay worse.

“How many ladies and gentlewomen are hurried away to these houses, which ought to be suppressed, or at least subject to daily examination, as hereafter shall be proposed?

“How many, I say, of beauty, virtue and fortune, are suddenly torn from their dear, innocent babes, from the arms of an unworthy man, who they love (perhaps but too well) and who in return for that love, nay probably an ample fortune, and a lovely off-spring besides, grows weary of the pure streams of chaste love, and thirsting after the puddles of lawless lust, buries his virtuous wife alive, that he may have the greater freedom with his mistresses?

“If they are not mad when they go into these cursed houses, they are soon made so by the barbarous usage they there suffer, and any woman of spirit who has the least love for her husband, or concern for her family, cannot sit down tamely under a confinement and separation the most unaccountable and unreasonable.

“Is it not enough to make any one mad to be suddenly clapped up, stripped, whipped, ill fed, and worse used? To have no reason assigned for such treatment, no crime alledged, or accusers to confront? And what is worse, no soul to appeal to but

merciless creatures, who answer but in laughter, surliness, contradiction, and too often stripes?

"All conveniences for writing are denied, no messenger to be had to carry a letter to any relation or friend; and if this tyrannical inquisition, joined with the reasonable reflections a woman of any common understanding must necessarily make, be not sufficient to drive any soul stark staring mad, though before they were never so much in their right senses, I have no more to say.

"When by this means a wicked husband has driven a poor creature mad, and robbed an injured wife of her reason, for 'tis much easier to create than to cure madness, then has the villain a handle for his roguery, then perhaps he will admit her distressed relations to see her, when 'tis too late to cure the madness he so artfully and barbarously has procured.

"But this is not all; something<sup>22</sup> more dismal effects attend this inquisition, for death is but too often the cure of their madness and end of their sorrows; some with ill usage, some with grief, and many with both are barbarously cut off in the prime of their years and flower of their health, who otherwise might have been mothers of a numerous issue, and survived many years. This is murder in the deepest sense, and much more cruel than dagger or poison; because more lingering; they die by piecemeal, and in all the agonies and terrors of a distracted mind.

"Nay, it is murder upon murder, for the issue that might have been begot, is to be accounted for to God and the public. Now if this kind of murder

<sup>22</sup> I. e., somewhat.

is connived at, we shall no doubt have enough, nay too much of it; for if a man is weary of his wife, has spent her fortune, and wants another, 'tis but sending her to a mad-house and the business is done at once.

"How many have already been murdered after this manner is best known to just Heaven, and those unjust husbands and their damned accomplices, who, tho' now secure in their guilt, will one day find 'tis murder of the blackest dye; has the least claim for mercy, and calls aloud for the severest vengeance.

"How many are yet to be sacrificed, unless a speedy stop be put to this most accursed practice, I tremble to think; our legislature cannot take this cause too soon in hand. This surely cannot be below their notice, and 'twill be an easy matter at once to suppress all these pretended mad-houses. Indulge, gentle reader, for once the doting of an old man, and give him leave to lay down his little system without arraigning him of arrogance or ambition to be a law-giver. In my humble opinion all private mad-houses should be suppressed at once, and it should be no less than felony to confine any person under pretence of madness without due authority.

"For the cure of those who are really lunatic, licensed mad-houses should be constituted in convenient parts of the town, which houses should be subject to proper visitation and inspection, nor should any person be sent to a mad-house without due reason, inquiry and authority.

"It may be objected, by persons determined to contradict everything and approve nothing, that the abuses complained of are not so numerous or



heinous as I would insinuate. Why are not facts advanced, they will be apt to say, to give a face of truth to these assertions? but I have two reasons to the contrary; the first is, the more you convince them the more angry you make 'em, for they are never better pleased than when they have an opportunity of finding fault. Therefore to curry favour with the fault-finders, I have left 'em a loop-hole. The second and real is, because I don't care to bring an old house over my head by mentioning particular names or special cases, thereby drawing myself into vexatious prosecutions and suits at law, from litigious wretches, who would be galled to find their villainies made public; and stick at no expence or foul play to revenge themselves. Not but I could bring many instances, particularly of an unhappy widow, put in by a villain of a husband, and now continued in for the sake of her jointure by her unnatural son, FAR from common honesty or humanity. Of another whose husband keeps his mistress in black velvet, and is seen with her every night at the opera or play, while his poor wife, (by much the finer woman) and of an understanding far superior to her thick skulled tyrant, is kept mean in diet and apparel, nay, ill used into the bargain; notwithstanding her fortune supplies all the villain's extravagancies, and he has not a shilling but what came from her. But a beggar when once set on horse-back proves always the most unmerciful rider.

"I cannot leave the subject without inserting one particular case.

"A lady of known beauty, virtue, and fortune, nay more, of wisdom, not flashy wit, was, in the prime of her youth and beauty, and when her senses

were perfectly sound, carried by her husband in his coach as to the opera; but the coachman had other instructions, and drove directly to a mad-house, where the poor innocent lady was no sooner introduced, under pretence of calling by the way to see some pictures he had a mind to buy, but the key was turned upon her, and she left a prisoner by her faithless husband; who while his injured wife was confined and used with the utmost barbarity, he like a profligate wretch ran through her fortune with strumpets, and then, basely, under pretence of giving her liberty, extorted her to make over her jointure; which she had no sooner done but he laughed in her face, and left her to be as ill used as ever. This he soon ran through, and (happily for the lady) died by the justice of Heaven in a salivation his debauches had obliged him to undergo.

“During her confinement, the villain of the mad-house frequently attempted her chastity; and the more she repulsed him, the worse he treated her; till at last he drove her mad in good earnest. Her distressed brother, who is fond of her to the last degree, now confines her in part of his own house, treating her with great tenderness; but has the mortification to be assured by the ablest physicians, that his poor sister is irrecoverably distracted.

“Numberless are the instances I could produce, but they would be accounted fictitious, because I don't name the particular persons, for the reasons before assigned; but the sufferings of these poor ladies are not fictitious, nor are the villainy of these mad-houses, or the unnatural, though fashionable barbarity of husbands chimeras, but too solid griev-

ances and manifest violations of the laws of God and man.

“Most gracious and august Queen Caroline! Ornament of your sex, and pride of the British Nation! the best of mothers, the best of wives, the best of women! begin this auspicious reign with an action worthy your illustrious self, rescue your injured sex from this tyranny, nor let it be in the power of every brutal husband to cage and confine his wife at pleasure. A practice scarce heard of ’till of late years. Nip it in the bud, most gracious Queen, and draw on yourself the blessings of numberless of the fair sex, now groaning under the severest and most unjust bondage. Restore ’em to their families, let ’em by your means enjoy light and liberty. That while they fondly embrace, and with tears of joy weep over their dear children, so long withheld from them, they may invoke accumulated blessings from Heaven upon your royal head!

“And you ye fair illustrious circle! who adorn the British court! and every day surround our gracious Queen, let<sup>23</sup> generous pity inspire your souls, and move you to intercede with your noble consorts for redress in this injurious affair. Who can deny when you become suitors? and who knows but at your request a bill may be brought into the House to regulate these abuses? The cause is a noble and a common one, and ought to be espoused by every lady who would claim the least title to virtue or compassion. I am sure no honest member in either honourable House will be against so reasonable a bill; the business is for some public spirited

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<sup>23</sup> A new sentence begins here in the original.

patriot to break the ice, by bringing it into the House, and I dare lay my life it passes.

"I must beg my reader's indulgence, being the most immethodical writer imaginable; 'tis true, I lay down a scheme, but fancy is so fertile I often start fresh hints, and cannot but pursue 'em; pardon therefore, kind reader, my digressive way of writing, and let the subject, not the stile or method, engage thy attention."

*English Commerce Not Declining*<sup>24</sup>

"We have loud complaints among us of the decay of our trade, the declining of our manufactures, and especially of our woolen manufacture; the contrary of which is, I think, evidently proved in this tract, and the reasons given for it will not be easily refuted. It is not any little negative put upon our manufactures, as to their consumption in this or that petty province or country in Germany, or elsewhere. Our manufacture, like a flowing tide, if 'tis bank't

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<sup>24</sup> From "A Plan of the English Commerce. Being a Compleat Prospect of the Trade of this Nation, as well the Home Trade as the Foreign. In Three Parts. Part I. Containing a View of the present Magnitude of the English Trade, as it respects, 1. The Exportation of our Own Growth and Manufacture. 2. The Importation of Merchants Goods from Abroad. 3. The prodigious Consumption of both at Home. Part II. Containing an Answer to that great and important Question now depending, Whether our Trade, and Especially our Manufactures, are in a declining Condition, or no? Part III. Containing several Proposals entirely New, for Extending and Improving our Trade, and Promoting the Consumption of our Manufactures, in Countries wherewith we have Hitherto had no Commerce. Humbly offered to the Consideration of the King and Parliament." 1728, pp. viii-ix.

out in one place, it spreads by other channels at the same time into so many different parts of the world, and finds every day so many new outlets, that the obstruction is not felt, but like the land to the sea, what it loses in one place, it gains in another.

“It is plain the manufacture cannot be declined, if the quantity of wool is wrought up, and the goods are consumed; on the other hand ’tis evident, the consumption of our manufactures, both abroad and at home, is exceedingly encreased; the first by the encrease of our correspondencies, and the last by the encrease of our people; and that to such a degree, as infinitely outweighs all that can be pretended of the prohibitions of them in Germany, or the imitations of them in France; nor are those things able to wound us so deep as our phlegmatic complainers would insinuate.

“But that a full answer may be given to all they can say of what loss we yet suffer, and to all they can suggest of what we may suffer hereafter, this work is calculated to shew how we may counteract it all at once. Namely, by improving and encreasing our trade in other places where those prohibitions and imitations cannot reach, and where, if half Europe should drop our manufacture, which yet ’tis apparent can never happen, we shall raise an equivalent vent for our goods, and make markets of our own; in which the whole world could not supplant us, unless they could subdue us.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> These courageous passages from the preface strike the optimistic note maintained by the entire book. Singularly enough, the prevailing economic opinion was that English commerce was in a bad condition.

*A Proposal to Increase Commerce on the Western Coast of Africa*<sup>26</sup>

“What then have the people of England more to do but to encrease the colonies of their own nation in all the remote parts, where it is proper and practicable, and to civilize and instruct the savages and natives of those countries, wherever they plant, so as to bring them by the softest and gentlest methods to fall into the customs and usage of their own country, and incorporate among our people as one nation.

“I say nothing of Christianizing the savages; ’tis remote from my present purpose, and I doubt much more remote from our practice, at least in most places; but I speak of an incorporation of customs and usages, as may in time bring them to live like Christians, whether they may turn Christians or no.

“To bring this home to the coast and country of Africa, of which I was but just now speaking, let them calculate the improvements proposed in business, in planting, fishing, shipping, and all the necessary employments that would attend a public improved colony, and let them tell me, if the consequence would not be a consumption of manufacture, among a people where there was none before, and in a place where we had no commerce to carry on before.

“Nor let any weak-headed Christian suggest that this would be to anticipate our West India trade, supplant our other colonies, and weaken us on one hand, while it strengthens us on another; let those who talk so, consider, 1st., the great improvements proposed, without meddling either with sugar, gin-

<sup>26</sup> From the same, pp. 341-343.



ger, or any of our island productions, and how great the improvement might be first made in these things. And 2dly., let me add that, as it is evident all our island colonies are not at this time sufficient to supply our markets with sugar, including the quantity demanded for exportation, the quantity cannot easily be too great; nor indeed is there any danger of it; so that those phlegmatic objections are easily to be answered, and need take up no room here. Let us see the improvement begun, and let us see the danger begun, of overcharging our markets, and hurting the trade of our islands, and let us hear if the islands complain; it is then time enough to answer those scruples; at present I must acknowledge they merit no consideration.

“On the other hand, there is a vast ocean of improvement in view upon the African coast, (tho’ the single planting of sugar was omitted) and as there are, as well on this side of the country, as on the eastern shores, of which I come next to speak, vastly populous nations, nay empires, where there are millions of people yet to trade with, who were never traded with before, the prevailing on these nations to civilize and govern themselves, according as informed nature would soon direct them, would necessarily introduce trade, consume manufacture, employ shipping, employ hands, and in time establish such a commerce as would be more than equal to any one foreign exportation we have yet to boast of.”<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Defoe had for many years written in favor of developing trade with Africa; indeed, he thought of trade in imperial terms, and not at all as a typical shopkeeper. Like most imperial thinkers, he was inclined to exaggerate, particularly with regard to the populousness of the savage countries whose inhabitants he wished to clothe in English woollens.

## CHAPTER XIII

THE CLOSING PERIOD—1729–1731

IF to the truly enormous literary labors of the four years treated in the foregoing chapter we add the books written, the new editions superintended, and the additional journalistic work undertaken by Defoe during the two years of life that remained to him, we are left wondering whether the annals of literature have anywhere to show a more marvelous old man. In the space of little more than six years he had written thirteen volumes and at least thirty pamphlets, and he had for several months conducted an important periodical, or else had made copious contributions to it. Both for quantity and for quality it is an astonishing record; that it is also a perplexing one will appear from a brief survey of such biographical facts as have been gleaned.

We have already mentioned a legal suit recently described in *Notes and Queries* in which Defoe became involved with his speculative partner, Mr. Ward. When our author died, he was apparently involved in another suit, which was connected

with debts of long standing. Some of his early creditors, Mr. Ward, and probably other persons of whom we have not heard, found him a rather perplexing and irritating man with whom to do business. This was the report of him given in a suit of a very different character by a young gentleman destined to be his son-in-law, Mr. Henry Baker, who, in 1724, began to pay frequent visits at the Defoe mansion in Newington, drawn thither by the attractions of the youngest daughter of the family, Miss Sophia Defoe.

Baker, who was born in 1698 and lived until 1774, made his fortune as a teacher of the deaf and dumb by a new method, but he obtained distinction also as a naturalist, he established an important journal, the *Universal Spectator*, the initial number of which was written by Defoe, and he published some volumes of verse. He had originally been very poor, but by the time Defoe sought his acquaintance at Newington, whither he repaired weekly to teach afflicted pupils, he had begun to rise in the world. We need not think that the canny father was seeking a husband for his daughter, since we have contemporary evidence of his kind sympathetic disposition, and since the *History of Duncan Campbell and Mere Nature Delineated* bear witness to his interest in methods for teaching the deaf and dumb. Fortunately we are in no doubt whatsoever as to Baker's motives, for some of that

gentleman's letters are extant, as well as a brief narrative of his relations with the Defoe family. He tells us that at the time he made Defoe's acquaintance the latter "amused his time, either in the cultivation of a large and pleasant garden, or in the pursuit of his studies, which he found means of making very profitable." He was afflicted with the gout and the stone, which sometimes "made company inconvenient," and on such occasions Mr. Baker was entertained by his host's "three lovely daughters, who were admired for their beauty, their education, and their prudent conduct." Usually, when the weather was pleasant, the tea-table was set in the garden, and it would seem that Mrs. Defoe, whether from inability or from choice, did not play the part of a watchful mother.

The young man soon discovered "the superior excellencies of Miss Sophia," to quote his own words, and he appears to have remained for the rest of his long life charmed with this discovery. He tells us that he knew nothing of Mr. Defoe's circumstances, but imagined "from his very genteel way of living, that he must be able to give his daughter a decent portion." On his speaking to Defoe, the latter sanctioned his proposals, "and said, he hoped he should be able to give her a certain sum specified; but when urged to the point some time afterward, his answer was, that formal articles he thought unnecessary; that he could confide in the

honour of Mr. Baker; that when they talked before, he did not know the true state of his own affairs; that he found he could not part with any money at present; but at his death, his daughter's portion would be more than he had promised; and he offered his own bond as a guarantee for the payment."

It is almost needless to say that this description of the wily old man has given rise to the theory that he was trying to entangle the young people in such a way that they would marry without a settlement rather than endure a tedious period of waiting. If such was his plan, he reckoned without the canniness of Mr. Baker, who had had experience with poverty. Some coolness ensued between the men, but after the tender of his heart to Miss Sophia, the lover gave his sweetheart no occasion to doubt the sincerity of his passion. She was his angel, but her father, so he wrote her, was wilfully secretive, a man whose conduct was certain to involve others in trouble and misery. Doubtless Baker had heard of Defoe's early business troubles, perhaps he knew that the property left Mrs. Defoe by her brother had been so tied up that Defoe could not touch it, perhaps some of the intrigues with Ward of Coleshill had come to his ears. However this may be, it is to Defoe's credit that his daughter seems to have thought that some of her lover's requirements were excessive, and we are glad to learn that in August, 1728, after about a year of haggling, it was ar-

ranged that a modest dowry should be secured by the lease on the house at Newington. Then came more bickering over the interest Defoe should pay and over other matters, and upon Baker's renewed denunciations of her father Sophia fell ill. That brought the two men to terms, for Baker was really in love and Defoe was devoted to his child. The young lady speedily recovered, and the wedding took place on April 30, 1729.

We are now arrived at one of the most mysterious periods in Defoe's life. In September, 1729, he wrote a letter to the printer of his treatise *The Compleat English Gentleman*, stating that he had been ill and had kept the first sheets of proofs too long, but promising that he would do better thereafter. Then, for some unknown reason, printing stopped, although the manuscript—now in the British Museum—was obviously almost complete. Eleven months later a letter written by Defoe to Baker shows that the old man is in hiding "about two miles from Greenwich, Kent." He refers most pathetically to the misconduct of one of his sons, to the distress of his wife and unmarried daughters, and to perils that confront his own disease-racked body. What had happened between September, 1729, and August, 1730, and what happened between the latter date and April 26, 1731, when Defoe died of a lethargy at his lodgings in Rope-maker's Alley, Moorfields, London—then a respect-



able part of the town—no one has yet been able to tell us with satisfactory fulness and certainty.

Some students have added to our perplexity by holding that the rather incoherent letter which is printed in full at the end of this chapter, was the product of an unsettled mind, and that when he wrote of the blow he had received "from a wicked, perjured, and contemptible enemy," Defoe may have been suffering from hallucinations. Lee believed that Mist was the implacable foe, and that he held papers that might embroil the former editor and spy with the new generation of Whig ministers. There are many objections to this view, however, and the discovery of numerous writings, not known to the earlier students, which bear testimony to the energy and alertness of Defoe's mind throughout the entire period from the autumn of 1729 until shortly before his death, renders the theory that he was subject to hallucinations almost untenable. It seems, on the other hand, to be clear that he was involved in a lawsuit at this time, and there is some reason to believe that he was speculating. If, therefore, we must accept a wicked enemy, we may perhaps find him in a creditor. That the pleasant home at Newington had been broken up after Defoe's illness in the autumn of 1729 seems clear. This may have been due to incumbrances placed upon the lease by Defoe, and the ungrateful son, probably Daniel Defoe, Jr., who is lacking in duty to his

mother and his dependent sisters, may have been involved in the transaction. We know that Baker and Sophia were anxious about the insurance policy upon the Newington house, the lease of which, it will be remembered, had been used to secure Sophia's dowry. We know also that they were pressing for a sale of the house. Beyond this all is dark, and speculation as to the real financial situation of Defoe seems idle. Perhaps the chance discovery of a document or a letter may make everything clear; perhaps the affair will always remain mysterious. It is at least pleasant to be sure that Defoe longed to go to Enfield to see his newborn grandson and Sophia, always his favorite child, and it is gratifying to be able to believe that at the time of her death, shortly after that of her husband, Mrs. Defoe was once more established at Newington. In addition, we are now sure that Defoe was busy with literary work, probably for most of the time, except the midsummer of 1730, in London—and as labor with his pen had obviously become as essential to him as the air he breathed, we may be permitted to hope that the last months of his life, even if spent in exile from his family, were not altogether wretched. Perhaps, while he was spinning copy for his publishers, he dreamed of successful speculations that would enable him to face his creditors and to return to the house and garden at Newington, there to write more books, and finally to die

surrounded by the family for whose fortunes he had labored so assiduously.

What now is the testimony that bibliographical research bears to Defoe's continued literary activity? First, strong internal evidence seems to show that not long after the death of Abel Boyer on November 16, 1729, the periodical that journalist had founded, the monthly *Political State of Great Britain*, which for many years had been hostile to Defoe, was being edited or else practically written by a man whose style bore a striking resemblance to that of Defoe. The suspicion that Defoe had managed to succeed his old enemy is converted into practical certainty when we find in the April number a partial reprint of a tract, the editorial introduction and the text of which are plainly Defoe's. This tract was *A View of the Inland Trade*, which the accomplished bibliographer, James Crossley, discovered years ago in pamphlet form, and unhesitatingly and correctly assigned to Defoe. Evidence that the veteran journalist and pamphleteer continued to write for the *Political State* through the number for October, 1730, is strong; after that another hand seems to be present, although it is not impossible that Defoe kept up some connection with the periodical. All that we need, however, to make us doubt whether his mind was clouded during this period, or else to make us feel sure that such hallucinations as he had were temporary, is to peruse

that readable pamphlet of the spring of 1730, the already named *A View of the Inland Trade*, and to observe its author's activity as a pamphleteer in the autumn of the same year.

Early in November appeared a tract entitled *The Generous Projector*, only about five pages of which contain matter not to be found in *Augusta Triumphans*. Some one else may, to be sure, have appropriated Defoe's brains in this fashion, but there is reason to think that he himself was the culprit. The same month apparently saw the publication of another pamphlet entitled *The Perjured Freemason*, an attack on a certain Samuel Pritchard, who was thought to have betrayed the secrets of the order. This pamphlet also was long ago and correctly assigned to Defoe by Crossley. The same bibliographer, with the assent of Lee, moreover gave to Defoe an excellent tract published in December, 1730, entitled *An Effectual Scheme for the Immediate Preventing of Street Robberies*. At the end of January, 1731, that valuable book *A Plan of the English Commerce* went into a second edition, to which its author contributed an appendix of forty pages. This was almost certainly written at some time in 1730, and it gives clear proof that Defoe's mind was still alert. Finally, it is probable that he had something to do with the appearance early in February of a second edition of his *System of Magic*, and there are at least three pamphlets of about

the same time that bear strong traces of his pen. He may have suffered some diminution of his literary activity between his illness in September, 1729, and his death in April, 1731, but the record of his industry is still remarkable in view of his age and infirmities. One wishes one could prove that he died writing.

He was buried in the cemetery now known as Bunhill Fields, and the newspapers gave him only the short, perfunctory obituary paragraph common at the time in all save exceptional cases, such as the death of the Duke of Marlborough. Fortunately the animosity he had once excited among his fellow journalists had entirely died away. Later his library, which seems to have been a good one, was sold, and although people continued to read *Robinson Crusoe* and a few others of the many volumes he had written, his fame was comparatively eclipsed until the end of the century. Then collectors began to gather his books, and biographers created a halo for his brow. The unfavorable view of his character held by his contemporaries regardless of party was abandoned or forgotten, and he was held up to admiration, not only as a genius, but as a Christian patriot of the highest type. Even the discovery of the letters that proved him to have been a government spy did not suffice to disillusion such stanch admirers as Crossley and Lee. Latterly, although he still has defenders, he has been on the whole too

severely judged, especially as regards his mendacity. That he was often unscrupulous, particularly in his propensity to espouse any cause for the sake of turning a penny, seems plain, and there is no doubt that he used every form of trick and deception that occurred to him in order that he might ply unmolested his trade of anonymous pamphleteer. But that he delighted in lying for its own sake, as some have suggested, there is little reason to believe; moreover he was doubtless at bottom a kind-hearted, religious, patriotic man, who in times more propitious to his journalistic vocation would have led a fairly prosperous life and left an unstained reputation. And when all is said, he was surely sinned against as well as sinning; for he could not have been bribed without having encountered a briber, he could not have played the part of secret agent and spy if statesmen, ostensibly men of honor, had not condescended to employ him, he would not have needed to resort to deceptions of all sorts if violent and cruel punishments had not been inflicted upon obnoxious writers.

And with all his faults and limitations what an extraordinary man he was! Quite certainly he was the most copious and versatile writer of his times, in whose works his age is mirrored with unparalleled fulness and clearness. He was a master journalist, a shrewd and influential politician, though he never held an office, a sound economist, a



fascinating writer on all that related to the commerce of his day, a widely read and useful moralist, a successful satirist, a creditable historian, and, to crown all, a novelist of adventure and low life unsurpassed in his kind. When we add that he has few rivals in his use of a clear, homely vernacular, and that the interest of his personality increases in direct proportion with our study of it, we may take our leave of him with the assurance that his position in literature is fixed and high, even if the enormous range and number of his works will forever prevent the mass of mankind from fully appreciating his genius. To them he will remain "the author of *Robinson Crusoe*," and it is doubtful, canny soul that he was, whether he would change his fate if he could.

*The Last of Defoe's Letters<sup>1</sup>*

"DEAR MR. BAKER,

"I have your very kind and affecc'onate letter of the 1st: but not come to hand till the 10th; where it had been delayed I kno' not. As your kind manner and kinder thought from w<sup>ch</sup> it flows, (for I take all you say to be as I always believed you to be, sincere and Nathaniel like, without guile) was a particular satisfacc'on to me; so the stop of a letter, however it happened, deprived me of that cordial

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<sup>1</sup> From Walter Wilson's "Memoirs of the Life and Times of Daniel De Foe." 1830, Vol. III, pp. 605-608. The text has been modernized except in a few idiosyncrasies.

too many days, considering how much I stood in need of it, to support a mind sinking under the weight of an afflicc'on too heavy for my strength, and looking on myself as abandoned of every comfort, every friend, and every relative, except such only as are able to give me no assistance.

"I was sorry you should say at the beginning of your letter, you were debarred seeing me. Depend upon my sincerity for this; I am far from debarring you. On the contrary, it would be a greater comfort to me than any I now enjoy, that I could have your agreeable visit w<sup>th</sup> safety, and could see both you and my dearest Sophia, could it be without giving her the grief of seeing her father *in tenebris*, and under the load of insupportable sorrows. I am sorry I must open my griefs so far as to tell her, it is not the blow I rec<sup>d</sup> from a wicked, perjured, and contemptible enemy, that has broken in upon my spirit; w<sup>ch</sup> as she well knows, has carryed me on thro' greater disasters than these. But it has been the injustice, unkindness, and I must say, inhuman dealing of my own son, w<sup>ch</sup> has both ruined my family, and, in a word, has broken my heart; and as I am at this time under a weight of very heavy illness, w<sup>ch</sup> I think will be a fever, I take this occasion to vent my grief in the breasts who I know will make a prudent use of it, and tell you, that nothing but this has conquered or could conquer me. *Et tu! Brute.* I depended upon him, I trusted him, I gave up my two dear unprovided children into his hands; but he has no compassion, and suffers them and their poor dying mother to beg their bread at his door, and to crave, as if it were an alms, what he is bound under hand and seal, besides the most sacred

promises, to supply them with; himself, at the same time, living in a profusion of plenty.<sup>2</sup> It is too much for me. Excuse my infirmity, I can say no more; my heart is too full. I only ask one thing of you as a dying request. Stand by them when I am gone, and let them not be wronged while he is able to do them right. Stand by them as a brother; and if you have anything within you owing to my memory, who have bestowed on you the best gift I had to give, let them not be injured and trampled on by false pretences, and unnatural reflections. I hope they will want no help but that of comfort and council, but that they will indeed want, being too easie to be managed by words and promises.

“It adds to my grief that it is so difficult to me to see you. I am at a distance from London in Kent; nor have I a lodging in London, nor have I been at that place in the Old Bailey, since I wrote you I was removed from it. At present I am weak, having had some fits of a fever that have left me low. But those things much more.

“I have not seen son or daughter, wife or child, many weeks, and kno’ not which way to see them. They dare not come by water, and by land here is no coach, and I kno’ not what to do. It is not possible for me to come to Enfield, unless you could find a retired lodging for me, where I might not be known, and might have the comfort of seeing you both now and then; upon such a circumstance, I could gladly give the days to solitude, to have the

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<sup>2</sup> This makes it probable that the son referred to is not, as has been thought, Benjamin Norton Defoe, the hackwriter, but Daniel Defoe, Jr., who appears to have been a fairly prosperous merchant.

comfort of half an hour now and then, with you both, for two or three weeks. But just to come and look at you, and retire immediately, 'tis a burden too heavy. The parting will be a price beyond the enjoyment.

"I would say, (I hope) with comfort, that 'tis yet well. I am so near my journey's end, and am hastening to the place where the weary are at rest, and where the wicked cease to trouble; be it that the passage is rough, and the day stormy, by what way soever He please to bring me to the end of it, I desire to finish life with this temper of soul in all cases. *Te Deum Laudamus*.

"I congratulate you on the occasion of your happy advance in your employment. May all you do be prosperous, and all you meet with pleasant, and may you both escape the tortures and troubles of uneasie life. May you sail the dangerous voyage of life with *a forcing wind*, and make the port of heaven *without a storm*.

"It adds to my grief that I must never see the pledge of your mutual love, my little grandson. Give him my blessing, and may he be to you both your joy in youth, and your comfort in age, and never add a sigh to your sorrow. But, alas! that is not to be expected. Kiss my dear Sophy once more for me; and if I must see her no more, tell her this is from a father that loved her above all his comforts, to his last breath.

"Your unhappy,

"D. F.

"About two miles from Greenwich, Kent.

"Tuesday, Aug<sup>st</sup> 12, 1730.

“P. S. I wrote you a letter some months ago, in answer to one from you, about selling the house, but you never signified to me whether you received it. I have not the policy of assurance; I suppose my wife, or Hannah, may have it.

*“Idem,*

“D. F.”

THE END





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